



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

TRADE UNION CONVENTION CALLS FOR

Countrywide Industrial Strike on November 29

P K Ganguly

The All India Trade Union Convention against the Economic Policies of the Government held at Delhi on September 17 unanimously adopted a Declaration calling for a countrywide industrial general strike on November 29, 1991. Earlier, the convention of public sector workers held on 16th September gave the same call for all India strike of public sector workers and officers on the same day. Both the conventions were organised by the Sponsoring Committee comprising of six Central Trade Unions and about 40 National Industrial Federations. The Sponsoring Committee was constituted on August 13 as the joint initiative taken by the CITU, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCC, UTUC (LS) and ITUC (Dara). These national federations in the Sponsoring Committee represented almost all the industries in the public sector, private sector and federations and confederations of Central Government and State Government employees.

This massive united strike has been called with a single major demand to scrap the sweeping economic policies taken by the Government under the IMF conditionalities.

In preparation for the strike, the Convention also led upon the trade unions to organise joint conventions statewide district wise and in all the major industrial centres of the country. Further, countrywide 1 Bharo programme will be launched on November 29 to culminate in the strike on November 29. The Declaration appealed to all trade unions and workers and employees irrespective of affiliations to join this massive strike action in the country. It appealed to all patriotic and democratic sections of the people to support the movement in the interest of the country.

In spite of the INTUC and BMS remaining away from the Sponsoring Committee, it was the largest united body of trade unions formed in recent years, that reacted sharply to the IMF dictated economic

policies of the Government and gave the call for the countrywide strike. The strike will cover not only the workers and employees in organised public and private sector, but those in the vast unorganised sector also, promising the biggest industrial bandh in the country.

With the main demand, as stated above, to reformulate the economic and industrial policies in consultation with the trade unions, the public sector workers added their several long pending demands like stopping of all measures of privatisation of the public sector units, finalisation of the DA Scheme guaranteeing full neutralisation at all levels of wages, finalisation of the pension scheme, employees' participation in management, trade union rights to the officers and finalisation of their various demands, etc. On these demands, the public sector workers and officers were scheduled to go on strike earlier, but had to postpone it due to elections.

The convention on 17th September was attended by about one thousand delegates representing all the industries in the public and private sector, from the unorganised sector of industries and by Central and State Government employees from all the states.

The convention was conducted by a presidium consisting of M K Pandhe (CITU), Y D Sharma (AITUC), R K Samant Rai (HMS), D D Shastri (TUCC), Sushil Bhattacharya (UTUC) and Badshah Khan (UTUC-LS).

E Balanandan, President of the CITU moved the Declaration of the Convention. Balanandan explained the anti-people, anti-working and the anti-national nature of each of the sweeping measures taken by the Narasimha Rao Government like the IMF loan, devaluation, the trade and industrial policies, the policy on the small and tiny sectors of the industries and the railway and general budget. He denounced the Government for making a total

surrender to all the conditionalities of the IMF, which threatened the economic and national sovereignty of the country and exposed the people to the full blast neo-colonial exploitation by the imperialists led by the USA. He said, the policies have taken the country to the brink of a debt trap. These will further aggravate the trade imbalance and the foreign exchange crunch, lead to further closures and sickness of industries, ruin the indigenous and traditional industries and technology, augment unemployment, fleece the common people with price rise and lead to new offensives on the organised and militant trade union movement. He called upon the delegates to mobilise all trade unions and the entire working class to make the strike a total success.

Among others who spoke were Veereshwar Tiyagi (HMS), M S Krishnan (AITUC), Prithish Chanda (UTUC-LS), Nani Bhattacharya (UTUC), Raja Ram Mehre (TUCC), Indrajit Gupta (AITUC), R Umanath (CITU), Jayant Poddar (HMS), Michael Fernandez (HMKP) Shyamal Chakravarty, Transport Minister of West Bengal, Sukomal Sen, MP, R. G. Carnik (State Govt. Employees), N. S. Bhangoo (AIREC), S.K. Vyas (Central Govt.) Samuel Augustine (AIDF), J. P. Choubey (AIRF), Tarkeshwar Chakrabarty (AIBEA), Ashis Sen (BEFI), Sunderam (AIEA), Sunil Sen (Coal-AITUC), Sunil Basu Ray (Coal-CITU), Mrinal Banerjee (Steel), R. S. Gill (FMRAI), Debanjan Chakrabarty (Construction), Bhupender Singh (Ekta Samity, Dalla), R.P. Bhattacharya (Air Corpn.) and Y.D. Sharma (AITUC).

Speaker after speaker expressed their serious concern over the unprecedented economic measures and explained how they have already adversely affected the various industries. They condemned the Government for having made a sell out to the multinationals and undermined efforts for building up a self-reliant economy. They expressed their resolve to make the strike a full success and carry forward the struggle further to compel the Government to retrace from its path. Several speakers made an appeal to the NF-Left parties to give a call for Bharat Bandh on November 29 in support of the strike.

The public sector workers' convention on 16th was presided over by Jibon Roy (CITU), M S Krishnan (AITUC), Michael Fernandez (JAF-Bangalore), Dyvadeenam (Hyderabad Coordination Committee of Public Sector Unions) and R K Samant Rai (HMS). Over 500 delegates attended the convention. Speakers expressed in the same vein their resolve to defend the public sector and the self-reliant economy.

The Dalla workers' struggle and sacrifice to defend the public sector became a focal point in both the conventions. Bhupender Singh President of the Ekta Samity, which is conducting the Dalla workers' struggle spoke in both the conventions. A number of industrial federations announced liberal contributions to the Dalla Workers' Relief Fund.

The convention ended with deafening slogans denouncing the economic policies and resolving for total industrial bandh on November 29.

Declarations of the two Convention are published here under.

All India Convention of Public Sector Workers 16th September 1991

Declaration

The All India Convention of Public Sector workers and officers held in New Delhi on 16th September 1991 expresses its grave concern at the recent economic policy measures announced by the Government of India which hit hard the very basis of self-reliance in the country and considerably slow down the rate of economic growth while trigger off inflation in the country. The big business houses in India and multinational companies will have their full say over Indian economy while the public sector and its employees will come under big attack challenging their very existence in the country. It further expresses its strong resentment at the inordinate delay in settling long pending issues of the public sector workers, which is causing strong discontent among them throughout the country.

The Tripartite Committee on DA for public sector workers constituted as early as November 1988 has not completed its deliberations despite lapse of more than two and a half years. The Government of India despite its earlier assurance has not yet given any proposal guaranteeing full neutralisation to workers at all levels. When the negotiations for new agreements are in the corner, the non-settlement of issues arising out of last settlements is creating anomalous position in PSUs.

The question of pension for the public sector employees has been kept hanging for several years with the result that the agreements signed on pension schemes in several undertakings have become meaningless for the workers. Over and above that, the circular issued by the BPE on 12th of April, that the managements of the public sector units can contribute only Rupees one hundred per year for all the workers taken together, has made a mockery of the entire concept of pension for the public sector workers.

While wage negotiations in most of the PSUs are due for the next long term settlements, the Government and the BPE are contemplating various obstructionist tactics with a view to deny the workers' legitimate rights and benefits.

The off-loading of jobs of PSUs, the reckless use of contract labour in jobs of permanent and perennial nature are being regularly practised in several undertakings, where the workers are paid appallingly low rate of wages while statutory provisions are largely remaining unimplemented.

The wage-scales and the question of DA for the Executives in public sector have been kept pending for several years with the result that officers are forced to resort to direct action and agitation. Several officers are facing penal transfers, withholding of promotions, stoppage of increments and other forms of penal action. The ILO Conventions regarding trade union rights to officers and service personnel

has not been ratified by the Government of India.

The public sector played a major role in development of core sector of economy and reduce India's dependence on foreign countries. India's march towards self-reliance would have been considerably retarded without the growth of public sector. The new economic policy announced by the Government of India will spell disaster on the PSUs. Several industries as steel, energy, oil, heavy engineering having been taken out of core sector, the big business and multinational companies are given blanket licenses to penetrate into these spheres of activity. Several sectors where substantial industrial capacity have been established in public sector, which have not been fully utilised so far, have been offered to multinational companies on majority equity participation. This will make several well-run public sector units sick. When the sickness and closures in all the industries in the country is becoming precarious, instead of reopening them the Government's policy will only add to the sickness in our country.

Due to the new trade policy several public sector units including the Bangalore based units are finding it difficult to get necessary foreign exchange and some of them have already issued notices for layoffs. Many units which are essentially producing products for domestic consumption but are dependent on imported components, spares and intermediary goods are all facing difficulties to obtain these essential materials for carrying out production. The decanalisation of some imported items has posed serious difficulties for several units to get required imported equipments and spares.

The irresponsible talk of privatisation of PSUs has created a serious situation for public sector units. Nearly one third former units of PSUs are made sick by private sector and which had to be taken over by the Government to protect the employment of workers. Instead of closing them down, attempts should be made to revive them in cooperation with the trade unions. Some of the units have become more sick after their taking over by the Government, due to lack of efforts to modernise them with a view to make them viable. Now a threat of referring to BIFR has been launched to further intensify the attack on the rights of the workers and to bring in veiled justification for winding up the units. The 20 percent disinvestment in equity of some public sector units undermines Government's commitment to public sector while the withdrawal of financial support to some PSUs will literally cripple them economically. Trade union movement of public sector workers will give full cooperation to every effort to revive the units in consultation with unions.

The three cement factories in UP having assets of Rs. 770 crores according to official figures were sought to be handed over to Dalmias for rupees twenty six crores with an initial payment of only one crore rupees. The Scooters India Limited with assets of more than Rs. 50 crores were offered to Bajaj for

a paltry sum of Rs. 4 crores. These examples only show that privatisation is a gimmick to handover huge public sector investments on a platter to favoured industrial houses.

The Convention congratulates Dalla cement workers for their heroic struggle against privatisation. It congratulates the Bank employees and officers for their determination to go on strike on 6th September against privatisation, when the Government of India was forced to give an assurance that there would be no privatisation of nationalised Banks. However the threat of privatisation is not over and the bank employees will have to be vigilant against any further attempt of privatisation.

To counter the drive for privatisation the functioning of the PSUs are to be made more efficient, corruption, nepotism, bureaucratic high-handedness, ill-motivated political intervention, denial of meaningful participation of workers in management, lack of democratic functioning etc are contributing to the inefficiency of the undertakings. As a result, public sector are incurring losses. Therefore all impediments in the way of improving the performance of the PSUs are to be overcome by the united TU movement. Introduction of genuine scheme of workers' participation in management will increase their commitment to improve the health of public sector units.

The trade union movement is not against introduction of new technology. Its introduction should be in consultation with trade unions and it should not lead to reduction of manpower.

This Convention emphatically declares the public sector employees movement does not consider the demands of the employees alone. They are concerned with the unorganised workers, their colleagues in the private sector and supports their just struggle. They pledge to fight for protection of small scale and traditional industry and join all the struggle to end the poverty from the Indian soil. Our struggle is a part of the national struggle for social justice.

The new economic measures of Government of India will prevent the PSUs from discharging the task of building a self-reliant economy and struggle against these policies is an inseparable part of the struggle to save the public sector.

Therefore at this crucial juncture defence of public sector and strengthening of public sector assume paramount importance, because in the concrete conditions existing in our country public sector forms the basis for building up self-reliance.

The Convention, therefore calls upon the workers of all affiliations in the PSUs to resist these policies of the Government with all their might and organise a powerful countrywide campaign on the following demands:

1. Reformulate the Industrial and Economic Policies of Government of India in consultation with

trade unions.

2. Stop all measures of privatisation of PSUs.
3. Provide necessary foreign exchange to import absolutely essential requirements of public sector units.
4. Scrap the BPE circular on Pension and immediate finalisation of Pension Schemes.
5. Immediate finalisation of Tripartite DA Committee's recommendations.
6. Commencement of bipartite negotiations on charter of demands of unions in PSUs within 2 months of their submission. No reference of any demands of workers to Industrial Tribunals or Pay Commission. Restore collective bargaining rights to LIC, GIC and RBI employees.
7. Statutory ban on off loading of jobs and engagements of contract labour in jobs of permanent and perennial nature in both public and private sector.
8. Immediate enactment of Bill on Workers' Participation in Management based on conclusions of Indian Labour Conference which endorsed the recommendations of seminar held in January 1990.
9. Withdraw ban on recruitment.
10. Ensure payment of Bonus to all employees.
11. Trade Union rights to officers in public sector and withdrawal of all penal actions against them for TU activities.

The Convention calls upon all the 22 lakh workers and officers in public sector to rise to the occasion and hold local conventions to popularise the demands raised by this convention. It appeals to all the workers and officers in all public sector units to observe All India Strike on 29th November so that magnificent unity of all the workers is displayed in support of these demands. It is only the powerful united movement of the public sector employees that can save the public sector and protect the interest of all its employees.

All India T.U. Convention Against Economic Policies of the Government, 17th September 1991

Declaration

The All India Trade Union Convention Against Economic Policies of the Government of India held in New Delhi on 17th September 1991 expresses its resolute opposition to the sweeping economic policy changes adopted by the Government of India in the interest of the Indian and foreign big business and multinationals under the pressure of the International Monetary Fund, which seriously endangers India's

goal of building a self-reliant economy and exposing the country to neo-colonial exploitation. It is reprehensible that the Government did not disclose the conditionalities of the IMF to the Parliament, nor consulted the working class before announcing these policy measures.

The devaluation of the Rupee to the tune of 20 percent will make imports costlier and the country will have to export 20 percent more goods to earn the same quantum of foreign exchange. It would push up the prices of all commodities having import content and considerably reduce domestic consumption to meet the growing export obligations.

The official spokesmen justified the devaluation on the plea of overcoming the balance of payment crisis in the wake of the foreign exchange reserves reaching rock bottom level. They tried to hide the fact from the people that the BoP crisis was created due to the policies of import liberalisation pursued by the Congress (I) Government during eighties which considerably increased the import bill and enhanced the adverse trade balance. Several non-essential luxury products like consumer durables were imported for the benefit of upper strata of the society causing huge drainage of foreign exchange resources. India's foreign debt increased by four times during the eighties to a colossal amount of about Rs. 2,00,000 crores which only underlines the reckless external borrowings throwing the entire Indian economy in the vortex of the foreign debt trap. To create a panicky situation, the government of India mortgaged 67 tonnes of gold to foreign banks.

The Industrial Policy announced by the Narasimha Rao Government delicensed the industries and allowed the big business houses to freely invest in any industry of their choice. It would concentrate industry in certain areas leaving vast hinterland backward leading to uneven development of different regions making a mockery of the whole concept of planning in India. By removing all the ceiling of assets, the MRTP Act has virtually been dismantled opening the floodgates of the growth of monopoly capital in India. The unabashed permission granted to foreign companies to own 51 percent equity capital in Indian companies will only increase the stranglehold of the multinational corporations over the Indian economy and harm India's capital goods industry. 100 percent equity has been opened out for foreign companies who export all their products, which as past experience shows, is conveniently violated.

The threat posed by the Super 301 and Special 301 to the service and agricultural sectors and to the pharmaceutical industry has considerably increased.

The welcome with open arms to all foreign technology, irrespective of whether it is essential and suitable to India's requirements and removal of all

restrictions on engaging foreign technicians will cost India very dearly making redundant the established indigenous technology and manufacturing technological capability.

While investment from NRIs is welcome, it is necessary to exercise caution to ensure that concessions given to them are not misused.

The privatisation of public sector undertakings on a big scale is now on cards threatening liquidation of several public sector units. Disinvestment of 20% equity will make the matters worse. Private sector has been given full freedom to penetrate into the core sector of economy such as steel, energy oil, and heavy engineering while sick public sector units would be referred to BIFR to pave the way for their ultimate liquidation or handing over to the private sector. The non-availability of foreign exchange to several public units will reduce their production capacities.

The 24 percent participation permitted to the big business houses and multinationals in small scale industry will enable the monopoly houses to swallow the small units or control them as appendages of large business houses. In the name of technical collaboration the foreign companies will be allowed to control the small scale sector. Massacre of a large number of small scale units will come on the agenda when the new policy will be implemented in full swing. When already large number of units have been closed down and the Government has failed to reopen them, this will only aggravate the existing problem of closures and sickness in the economy.

The Railway Budget and the General Budget have been prepared under the shadow of IMF conditionalities. The fare and freight hike in the railway budget will impose heavy burden on common people. The General Budget instead of imposing additional direct taxation on the industry, on the rural and urban rich, imposes crushing burden on the common people through indirect taxation and deficit financing.

The basic thrust of the economic policy accentuates the orientation in favour of the elitist and affluent section of the people accelerating the process of pauperisation of the vast mass of people.

The proposed Exit Policy gives full freedom for the capitalist to close down the unit at his sweet will and throw out of job large number of workers without any fault of theirs. It will further aggravate the already high unemployment in the country. The so called relief in the name of rehabilitation or retraining will give only symbolic relief without any guarantee of job, making them totally unprotected from the depredations of the capitalist class.

The new trade policy favours the export oriented industries by granting them 30 percent import of their export performance in the form of Exim Scrips which could be traded in open market allowing open speculation and concerning of foreign exchange for personal use, thus leaving several needy industries in

difficulties for the required foreign intermediary goods and components.

The New Economic measures will bring unprecedented inflationary pressure on Indian economy. Already the prices of essential commodities has gone to astronomical heights. The rate of inflation is projected to go upto 20 percent which will push up the prices of essential commodities to astronomical heights. The loss of jobs of lakhs of workers will lead to shrinkage of domestic market and cause further stagnation in economy.

The new policy will further result in more attacks on workers' living and working conditions and on their trade union and democratic rights.

The Convention urges upon the trade unions to fight for alternative policy measures to overcome the present critical situation through steps such as: reduction of all non-essential imports, mopping up of all black money and strong action against tax evaders, protection to small scale industry, introduction of genuine land reforms to generate more jobs in rural sector, more taxation against larger industrial houses and monopolist, bring back to India foreign exchange resources kept abroad by industrial houses, improve the efficiency of our undertakings through genuine scheme of employees' participation in management, etc. These measures will pave the way for advancing towards a self-reliant economy.

This Convention, therefore, endorses the call given by the Sponsoring Committee of this Convention for all India strike to voice the protest of the Indian working class against these anti-national, anti-people and anti-working class economic policies and demand their reversal.

Accordingly, the Convention unanimously resolves to observe an one-day countrywide industrial general strike on Friday, the 29th November 1991. It appeals to all sections of workers and employees in the public sector, private sector, central and state government employees all over the country, to join this massive strike action on November 29.

This Convention welcomes the decision of the All India Convention of Public Sector workers to go on strike on the same day. This step will immensely help in strengthening the working class unity in the country on common issues.

In preparation of the strike the Convention calls upon all the trade unions to jointly organise conventions statewide, districtwise and at each important industrial centres of the country.

The Convention further calls upon the trade unions and all sections of workers and employees to launch massive Jail Bhara action all over the country on November 18, 1991.

The Convention appeals to all other mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth and women and the patriotic and democratic sections of the people, and to all those adversely affected by the retrograde economic policies to support this massive countrywide action.

Forward to United Strike

R. Umanath

16th and 17th of September 1991 will go down in history as a major turning point in the Indian Trade Union movement. The decisions of the Public Sector Convention and the All TU Convention against Government's Economic Policies, held on these dates, will be written in golden letters. Unity, wider than CPSTU and NCC were forged through these conventions. Hitherto unity was forged against consequences of the policies of the government, whereas these two conventions created history by forging a united front against a whole set of anti-national policies of the government and in favour of alternative policies, to bail out the country's economy.

The climax was the call of these conventions to the working class of India to down their tools on 29-11-91 and for a jail Baro on 18-11-91, as the signal for the initiation of the prolonged struggle in defence of country's economic independence from multi-national onslaught, in defence in indigenous and small-scale industries, in defence of public sector, against mass closures, retrenchment and lay off and in defence of the interests of the people.

The Indian working class is called upon to intervene and go into action in an extra-ordinary situation, which, neither the country, nor we faced ever before.

Previously when the IMF or World Bank used to pressurise India, the government had the option to lean on fraternal assistance of the USSR. But today, when IMF sees that India is no more in position to bargain with the help of USSR, the IMF is driving home the advantage mercilessly, by pressurising Indian government into submission.

Government of India, which is not willing to resist this pressure by taking recourse to democratic alternatives, lest it hurts the Indian big business, has chosen to totally surrender to the brute conditionalities of the IMF. This is the crux of the situation which is facing the working class and the nation today.

In such a situation, when the ruling party has chosen to drag the country's economy down the drain, and when the officially recognised opposition in Parliament, the BJP, has chosen to sail with the government, who is there to check this disaster and save the country? The Left parties are doing their utmost. But the only organised force to check this disaster is the working class. Working class alone has the stamina and the organisational strength to stall this offensive.

The unity forged in the public sector convention, and the wider unity forged in the All TU Convention and the ringing call for direct action given by the convention, inspires the confidence that the working class of India is rising to the occasion.

Taking advantage of the government's surrender to the IMF, the monopolists of our country are pressing the government to declare a war on our hard won existing gains and rights.

B K Modi demands that the employers must not only have the right to close factory, but the right to hire and fire at will.

FICCI president V L Dutt demands that a legislation permitting 5% retrenchment every year, must be passed.

Another voice demands that TUs must voluntarily accept wage freeze for two years, in the name of crisis to the nation.

Birla has openly demanded de-linking DA from cost of living index and linking it with productivity.

Ruddar Dutt, President of Indian Economic Association declares that 'absolute security of service is anathema to efficiency' and demands that security of service be dispensed with.

Above all, Birla has demanded that new industrial law be enacted, that will ensure, 'discipline and productivity', which means unbridled powers to enforce punitive measures to beat the workers into submission.

Let the 29th November strike be a warning to the Tatas, Birlas and other monopolists, that they will get in their necks, if they dare lay their hands on our hard won existing rights.

The struggle to reverse the economic policies will be a bitter and prolonged struggle. The one day strike alone will not reverse these policies. This will be the beginning of the bitter struggle.

But this one day's massive action will induce the peasantry, which is a victim of this very policy, to fight in a big way.

—will inspire the small-scale industrialists who are also victims of these policies, to come out into the street fight.

—will inspire all those interested in protecting indigenous industry against the multi-national onslaught, to fight back.

—will inspire millions of our workers :

—in factories, workshops, and offices to bitterly fight the consequences, inch by inch, like the hand to hand fight in a war.

In short, our one day's strike will sow the seeds for a wider national resistance to these policies, before which, these policies will crumble.

Today the IMF is gloating over the fact that they have been able to bend the Government of India. But the November 29th massive strike will reveal to the IMF that the government of India is not the real arbiter of the destiny of the country. In a flash, the strike will show that the working class of this country is the real arbiter of the destiny of this nation.

Despite all debates in Parliament, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao repeatedly says that there is no going back on these policies.

Yes! The Prime Minister will not understand if we tell him in English, or Hindi or in any regional lang-

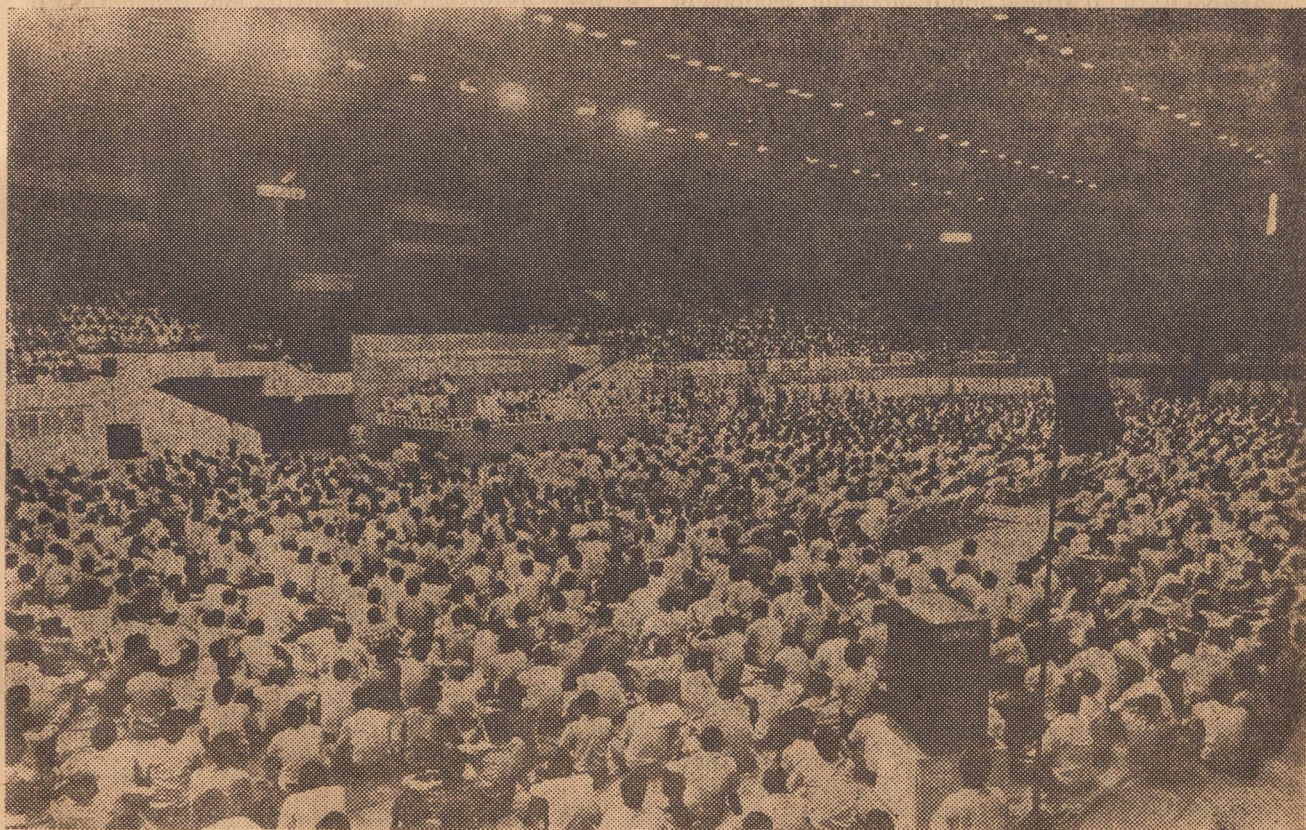
uage of the country. The only language he understands is the international class language—STRIKE.

The working class of India will force him to understand through this language.

Last month, the entire working class of a small nation, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC went on an indefinite strike—not for bonus, but against a new agreement with the IMF. The Indian working class shall march shoulder or shoulder with our class brothers in third world, who are blazing a new trail.

Comrades! the gauntlet thrown by the IMF has been taken up. The battlelines have been drawn. The bugle has been sounded. The entire class is marking steps. All fighting trade unions must jump into the fray. Every factory gate, every department and every office must be turned into a battle field, to win over every single worker, employee and officer for the historic strike 29th November. The fighting message of the convention should be carried to the INTUC and BMS ranks, too.

The working class has to come forward to hold high the banner of patriotic resistance!



Trade Union Convention held at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta on August 26 against the Economic Policies of the Central Government, attended by 20,000 delegates.

Clarion Call Of CITU Working Committee

Prepare For Countrywide Industrial Strike

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Delhi from September 1 to 3, 1991 gave a clarion call for a countrywide industrial general strike against the sweeping economic measures taken by the Narasimha Rao Government, which constitute a sell-out of the country's economic sovereignty to the IMF and the multinationals.

The meeting welcomed the joint move taken by several Central Trade Unions and national federations in this direction in a broad based meeting held at Delhi on 13th August, having formed a Sponsoring Committee and convened a national convention at Delhi on 17th September, from where the call for the strike will be given.

The Working Committee appealed to all trade unions and all sections of working people irrespective of affiliations, in the public and private sector and to central and state government employees to join this massive countrywide strike action. It appealed to the patriotic and democratic sections of people and all those adversely affected by the economic policy to support the movement in the interest of the economic and national sovereignty of the country.

The Working Committee noted with appreciation the preparations and campaign already launched by the various state committees and the massive twenty thousand strong convention held in W. Bengal towards successful materialisation of the strike, and appealed to the Sponsoring Committee to fix up the date of strike at the earliest to be announced in the Convention.

Address by the President

Responding to the demand of the situation, the meeting was attended by a record number of 121 members including two special invitees. E. Balanandan, in his presidential address dealt with the international situation in depth in the light of the latest developments in Soviet Union, the activities of the imperialist backed counter revolutionary forces and called for intensified struggle against imperialism and for defence of socialism in the spirit of the October revolution. On the national situation he warned against the IMF conspiracies to draw India into the neo-colonial net of imperialism and called for united direct action of the working class to get the IMF dictated economic policies scrapped.

(The full text of the Presidential address is being published in this issue—Ed.)

General Secretary's Report

M. K. Pandhe in his General Secretary's report referred to the international situation as explained in the Presidential address and linked it to the national situation, elaborating how the Narasimha Rao Government of Congress (I) had surrendered to the full prescriptions of the IMF. Beginning with the IMF loan, he elaborated in the report the dangerous consequences of the devaluation, the trade and industrial policies and the Union Budget, which would not only impose unbearable burdens on the common people, but also expose all sections of the people to newer forms of neo-colonial exploitation by imperialism and threaten the economic and national sovereignty of the country. By taking the IMF loan with its accompanying conditionalities, the government had pushed the country nearer to the debt trap. Devaluation will further widen the trade imbalance and put pressure on the foreign exchange reserve. The Industrial Policy with its diabolical IMF prescriptions of delicensing, decontrol, deregulation, 51 per cent foreign equity shares, and dismantling of the MRTP Act was nothing but to allow the multinationals to control the Indian economy. Denigration of the public sector, unbridled development and entry of the private sector and the multinationals into the domain of public sector in the name of high technology was a severe blow to all efforts to build a self-reliant economy. Even the small scale and tiny sectors have been allowed to be ravaged by big business, both Indian and foreign. The hike in railway freights and fares and the Union Budget with its high indirect taxation, deficit financing, cut in subsidies, rise in fertilizer prices, etc in fact completes the IMF prescriptions to bleed the common people white.

The report referred to the efforts made by the CITU in mobilising the opinion of other central organisations and federations, which culminated in a broad based meeting and formation of a Sponsoring Committee to organise two national conventions at Delhi—one of public sector workers on 16th September and the other the national trade union convention on 17th September, wherefrom the call for countrywide strike is to be given. It further referred to the Delhi Chalo programme on 27th September given by the Left-NF parties against the economic policies and called upon the CITU unions to participate in it in a massive way.

The report also dealt with various other activities of the CITU in the sphere of unorganised sector, on the working women's front, and struggles in various industrial sectors. The report drew pointed

attention to the police firing at Dalla Cement factory, which killed a number of workers, who martyred themselves to save the public sector and called for all India support to their ongoing struggle to revoke the privatisation deal. The report pointed to the unabated danger from secessionist and communal forces represented by the Khalistanis, Jamaite-Islami and the RSS-BJP-VHP combine and called for continuous vigil and struggle for national unity. The report reviewed the implementation of the Seventh CITU Conference decisions, regarding observance of unity week, Com. BTR's death anniversary day on 6th April, raising of CITU Special Fund, the progress in the construction of Com. BTR Memorial Trust, etc. The report especially stressed on all organisational aspects including drive for membership, democratic functioning, etc as discussed in the 7th Conference and the Kanpur General Council. Concluding the report Pandhe called for brisk preparations to mobilise the mass of workers at the grass root level and participate in the two conventions with the preparation to materialise the countrywide strike.

Two separate notes were also placed respectively by Kali Ghosh on the ESI Scheme and by V. B. Chorian on the 'Employees' Pension Scheme as proposed by the Central Board of Trustees (Provident Fund).

Deliberation Directs to Strike Action

Discussions on the General Secretary's report directed towards the countrywide strike action as the only recourse to meet the challenges posed by the economic measures taken by the Government. Members after member pointed to the consequences of the economic measures which had started coming to surface in various industries and states. They pointed to threat of closures, price rise, privatisation of various departmental works in public sector, resistance to concede economic demands, etc as the immediate results of the policies. Simultaneously, taking advantage of the international situation, a campaign was brewing up to divide the trade union movement and isolate the left trade unions. Members specifically pointed to the role of the BMS in this respect, which supported the policies of the Government and towed the line of the managements. The Working Committee members elaborated the programmes being taken at State, District and union levels to mobilise other trade unions and the workers at grass root level to wage united mass actions to culminate into strike by explaining the anti-working class, anti-people and anti-national features of the economic policies. Simultaneously, they expressed their resolve to defend the gains of the October Revolution and carry forward the anti-imperialist tradition of the Indian working class and the people.

Initiating the debate, Biren Roy (W. Bengal), asserted that socialism cannot fail. Experience of the capitalist system is bound to give rise to working class struggle. However, proper education and campaign have to be launched in this direction. On

the economic policies of the Government he urged for serious campaign against the IMF loan and other measures and alternative policies in preparation for the strike. Kali Ghosh (W. Bengal) pointed to the danger of regionalism as a result of economic imbalances that will follow from the new economic policies. He further pointed out that as per the Government's pronouncement, the sick units will be referred to the BIFR. This means that these units will go into liquidation and the workers will not get any compensation even. Besides, the policy will lead to closures of the small units. West Bengal, which is leading in the development of small scale industries, will thus be badly affected. He referred to the massive convention held at Calcutta, which was participated by INTUC also and said that W. Bengal was fully prepared for the strike action in early October. Shyamal Chakrabarty (W. Bengal) elaborately dealt on the Soviet development and narrated the action programmes being launched in W. Bengal against the acts of vandalism by the counter-revolutionary forces in Soviet Union.

N. Padmalochanan (Kerala) made a scathing criticism of the policies. He said Kerala's economy was mainly based on the cashew and other traditional industries, which will be ruined by the new economic policies. He briefed various programmes that are being launched throughout the state in preparation for the strike in the form of convention, demonstrations, educative campaigns, seminars, etc. The CITU publication on the economic policies by M. K. Pandhe had already been translated in Malayalam and distributed to workers in thousands.

A K Padmanabhan (Tamilnadu) said that in the public sector, the Hindustan Petroleum, Salem Steel plant, etc are facing problems. In the unorganised sector, the handloom, powerloom and the hosiery units have fallen deeper into crisis due to the policies. Prices of yarn have further gone up. Cotton is not available due to its export. The employers have started closing down the units. He also briefed about the joint action plan taken in the State for the preparation of the all India strike. The CITU publication is being utilised fully. He suggested for further educative pamphlets and articles both on the economic policies and on the international situation.

Chandrasekhar (Punjab) pointed out that nearly 50 percent of the small units in Punjab have already closed down after the new industrial policy. He informed that joint state level convention has already been decided in the state. They have launched full campaign for the one day countrywide strike to be materialised in October.

Amal Ghosh Dastidar (Assam), D G Narasimha Rao (AP), J S Majumdar (Bihar), S N Solanki (Haryana), Hethram Beniwal (Rajasthan) S Kumar (MP), V J K Nair (Karnataka), Harsahay Singh (UP), S B Bharadwaj (Delhi), Subodh Mehta (Gujarat), Shivaji Patnaik (Orissa) and other members briefed about the preparations being launched in their states for the strike. Despite problems being

faced from some other trade unions, they showed their preparedness for the strike action in October.

Struggle against Privatisation of Dalla Cement

While dealing with the question of privatisation, members referred to the Dalla cement factory firing and the programmes of solidarity being launched in various states and industrial centres.

P K Ganguly moved a resolution on the grim struggle of the Dalla cement workers against the privatisation, which was being carried forward at Dalla as well as at Lucknow, where one worker had died. The struggle was being conducted under the banner of Ekta Samity comprising of all the trade unions and the officers' association. Sunil Basu Roy while supporting the resolution, reported about his visit to Lucknow alongwith Shivaji Patnaik and Haradhan Roy.

Members also discussed on the reports on ESI and Pension Scheme and pointed out the various anomalies. The meeting authorised the Secretariat to prepare the concrete stand and suggestion of the CITU on the subjects.

A resolution on Punjab was adopted, being moved by Balwant Singh and supported by K. Ramani. Another resolution in support of the proposed Bank Strike was moved by Md. Amin and supported by V B Cherian. A resolution on Tripura denouncing the semi fascist regime and supporting the valiant struggle of the workers was moved by V B Cherian and supported by P K Ganguly. The resolution on operation of Bank Account was moved by Ranjit Basu and supported by P K Ganguly.

Main Resolution

After all discussions, the main resolution of the meeting viz on the Economic Policies of the Government was moved by R Umanath and seconded by Manoranjan Roy. K N Ravindranath, P K Ganguly and Ramnika Gupta also spoke on the resolution. The resolution analysed the economic measures in the light of the discussions and gave the stirring call for a countrywide strike action demanding their reversal. (The resolution is being published hereunder).

After reply by M K Pandhe, the report was adopted unanimously. The meeting concluded after summing up by E. Balanandan with the clarion call to all unions to go ahead with the mobilisation of all workers and trade unions for the countrywide strike action and gear up the entire organisational machinery in this respect.

The meeting further decided to observe Nov. 7 to 17 in defence of October Revolution. A leaflet will be brought out for this purpose.

Working Committee Resolution

On Economic Policies of the Government

This Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Delhi from September 1-3, 1991 denounces the minority Congress(I) Government of Narasimha Rao for adopting sweeping and unprecedented economic policies which constitute a sell-out of the country's economic sovereignty to the IMF and the multinationals.

The meeting rejects the Government's argument that there was no alternative to the IMF loan to tide over the present BoP crisis. The crisis is the making of the Congress (I) itself. The same argument was forwarded by the Indira Gandhi Government in 1981, when it took similar IMF loan under Extended Financing Facility, which is given under stringent conditionalities, and the policy of liberalisation further followed by the Rajiv Government, has brought the country to the present serious situation, aggravating the BoP crisis. Indiscriminate imports being financed by international borrowing, have raised the debt service ratio to about 30 percent of the export earnings from about 10 to 12 percent during the eighties, which have caused a drainage on the foreign exchange reserves. In order to create a panicky situation so that the people accept this sell out, Indian gold reserves were pledged to the Bank of England. By taking the loan the Government has taken the country nearer to the debt trap, similar to the Latin American countries.

All the other measures like the devaluation of the Rupee by 20 percent, change in the trade and industrial policies, and the railway and general budgets came as unavoidable and inevitable corollaries to the loan conditionalities.

The argument that devaluation of the Rupee and changes in the trade policy will lead to increase in exports and fall in imports is not tenable by facts. Experience has shown that exports from India and other Third World countries have not been responsive to devaluations made earlier. On the contrary, trade balance has been progressively negative. 20 percent devaluation will increase the import bills and further widen the trade imbalance, putting further pressure on foreign exchange reserve.

Further, this will automatically increase the prices of the imported goods and as a chain reaction, of all other commodities and spiral the inflationary pressure. It will decline the real wages of the workers and lead to shrinkage of the domestic market, recession, closures and growth in unemployment. The IMF loan and devaluation alone will thus push the country into a vicious circle, exposing the common people to the ruthless neo-colonial exploitation by the imperialist countries.

The Industrial Policy announced by the Government threatens to completely undermine India's self-reliance. By allowing entry of the private sector

both Indian and foreign, in the domain of core sector, which was exclusively reserved for the public sector in the 1956 Industrial Policy Resolution, the Government has opened floodgates for them, particularly the multinationals, to control the Indian economy. By delicensing, de-regulation, de-control, by diluting of FERA through 51 percent foreign equity, and by virtual dismantling of the MRTP by removal of ceiling on assets, the Government has given a go-bye to planned national economy. The Government has taken a move to hand over Banking and the service sector to the multinationals to have full control over the national economy. The Patents Act and Intellectual Property Rights are also likely to go in the process. The US imperialists may not require to keep the Super 301 and Sepcial 301 hanging over India like a Damocle's Sword.

As if this was not enough, the monopolists and the multinationals are also being allowed to enter the small scale and tiny sector of industries. The opening of the agro-industries sector to foreign capital will allow them to fleece the peasantry, who are already the worst exploited under the long rule of the Congress.

The new Industrial Policy will lead to further closures and sickness. It has brazenly announced that all public sector sick units will be referred to the BIFR, with a view to their liquidation. The policy will ruin indigenous technology, the traditional and small scale industries and further aggravate the unemployment situation in the country.

The Union Budget which has come in the wake of the above economic measures and the hike in Railway fares and freight, has put further burdens on all sections of toiling people. The steep hike in the fertilizer prices will hit the peasantry and agricultural labourers. The hike in petrol, cooking gas and sugar prices will hit hard the common man. The cut in subsidies as a consequence of IMF conditionalities has put the public distribution system under severe strain. Increase in indirect taxation and deficit financing have been kept as constant weapons to fleece the people. It is reprehensible that the Government has not increased direct taxation or wealth tax, nor made any efforts to mop up the huge black money for resource mobilisation.

The total gamut of the IMF dictated economic measures constitutes an all round attack on the working class and common people. It will have its impact on the labour policy of the Government also and lead to new offensives on the working class and their trade union rights. The policies not only pose a danger to the country's economic sovereignty, but also to its freedom and independence.

The meeting welcomes the alternative suggestions given by the Left Front Government of W. Bengal and the statement adopted by the left economists' convention in defence of economic sovereignty sponsored by the left parties held at Delhi in July and condemns the Central Government for not accepting the same. The Working Committee calls upon

all affiliated unions to take these alternatives to the mass of the workers.

The Working Committee heartily greets the near total unity forged by the trade unions in W. Bengal against the new economic policy of the Government of India, and takes favourable note of their joint request to central trade unions to organise a day's protest strike.

The Working Committee calls upon the entire working class and trade unions irrespective of political affiliations to unitedly rise to the occasion and launch massive protests and countrywide strike action demanding scrapping of the economic measures. It appeals to all patriotic sections of the people to support the movement in the interest of the nation. It appeals to all sections of people who are adversely affected by the new economic policies of the Government to join and strengthen this movement.

The meeting welcomes the decisions of several central trade unions and federations to jointly organise all India conventions at Delhi of public sector workers and against economic policies of the Government on September 16 and 17 to decide the date for a countrywide industrial strike to protest against the economic measures.

The meeting congratulates the employees and officers in the banking industry for their decision to go on strike on 6th September against the move of privatisation of the banks. It calls upon CITU unions to observe the day along with other unions to oppose the policy of privatisation.

The Working Committee expresses its solidarity with the peasantry who have come out on struggle against the rise in fertilizer prices in various parts of the country.

The meeting welcomes the decision of the Left N. F. parties to organise a countrywide rally of workers and peasants and other mass organisations at Boat Club, Delhi on 27th September to protest against the economic measures. The Working Committee appeals to all sections of workers to join this massive rally in large numbers.

The meeting appeals to all sections of workers and employees in the public and private sector, the Central and State Government employees to join this massive strike action and forge ahead unitedly with further militant actions to uphold the banner of national sovereignty and force the Government to reverse the policies.

Editorial Board

M. K Pandhe (*Chairman*)

P.K. Ganguly (*Working Editor*)

Manoranjan Roy, Niren Ghosh,

M.M. Lawrence, Vimal Ranadive, Ranjit Basu

Working Committee Meeting
1 to 3 September '91 New Delhi

Presidential Address

E. Balanandan

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of all of you let me pay homage to the heroic workers of Dalla Cement Factory (U.P.) who fell victims to police bullets during their struggle against privatisation.

In Punjab many more innocent lives have fallen victim to terrorist bullets. Let me pay homage to them on your behalf. The semi-fascist terror unleashed by the Congress(I)—TUJS rule in Tripura continues unabated. With administrative and police connivance, hired goondas and police have killed scores of left-front supporters during the last general elections. Let me pay homage to these martyres on your behalf.

I also pay homage to the memory of all the leaders and cadres of the working class and other democratic movements who departed during this period.

Before proceeding with other issues let me first congratulate Com. Jyoti Basu, our Vice-President, and the Left-Front on your behalf for their magnificent victory in the last general elections. The people of West Bengal have reposed their faith in the Left-Front for a record fourth term which in itself is unique. We are glad to note that the working class centres of West Bengal generally rallied behind the Left-Front and ensured its victory. The government of West Bengal has served the people of the State within the constitutional and other constraints. It has earned them enormous goodwill among the people of the State and the country as a whole. West Bengal once again has emerged as the advanced outpost of democracy in the country.

In our 7th Conference held at Calcutta from 13th to 17th of February, 1991 we had assessed in brief the then prevailing national and international situation. Six months have elapsed since then. Very disturbing developments have taken place in international and national sphere during this period. In the Presidential Address to the 7th Conference, Com. Jyoti Basu referred to the Gulf War and observed among other things that "The issue in this case became the control of the oil rich areas of West Asia; after all the world's 1001.5 billion barrels of proven oil deposits, Saudi Arabia—Iraq, UAE, Kuwait and Iran possess 55 per cent". The United States together with its imperialist allies and supported by many Arab regimes crushed the Iraqi resistance.

While the restoration of independence of Kuwait was demanded by the democratic forces of the world, the real aim of US and other imperialist forces was

not confined merely to get Iraq out of Kuwait's territory. They continue to stifle Iraq under the cover of various UN resolutions and through substantial military penetration into Iraqi territory. They continue to build up their military presence in Middle East in a bid to establish control over the oil rich areas of West Asia. We should not lose sight of the fact that this strategic hold out of imperialists in the Middle East—junction of the three main continents of Europe, Africa and Asia—poses a potential danger to the independence and sovereignty to the countries and peoples of these continents.

The above build up is in addition to their already existing global net-work of more than two thousand military bases which include such giants like those at Deigo Garcia, Clerk-Field, Cubic Bay, etc.

One point needs special mention here. The role played by the USSR in the United Nations' fora in the wake of the Gulf war was one which in effect dove-tailed the US position. It is unfortunate that China also was not consistent in demarcating itself from and effectively setting itself against U. S. intentions.

After the victory of the Gulf War, the USA is now attempting to weaken the PLO, the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The Arab unity has become a casualty especially after the Gulf War. The Organisation of Arab States (OAS) and Arab League are not able to mobilise the Arab nations against the imperialist offensive and encroachments. The new international conference which is proposed to be called, is to by-pass the PLO exploiting the divisions existing among the Arab countries. The attempt is to further weaken the PLO and to widen the disunity among the Arab people. This will further help to consolidate and strengthen the Israeli position.

Non-Aligned Movement Weakened

The Non-Aligned Movement stands weakened today, thanks to the Soviet Union's changed foreign policy perceptions. The unity of the Third World is also weakened today. The counter-revolutionary forces are quite active in Mozambique, Angola and many other African countries. The success of counter revolution in Ethiopia, and the growth of fundamentalist forces in Algeria etc add to the setbacks and reverses to revolutionary and national liberation movements.

The Burmese military clique has refused to transfer power to the elected representatives of the

people and the people's resistance against this is continuing. In Pakistan the elected government of Benazir Bhutto had been toppled and a government under IJI established through a fake election with the backing of the military.

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka continues to worsen with each passing day. The Sri Lankan Government's policy of pitting the LTTE against other Tamil groups and the Sinhala Chauvinists against the Tamils has only compounded matters and resulted in widening the rift. Keeping the Indo-Sri Lankan accord as a basis, a rational solution, within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka will have to be found.

Despite the above set backs, some progress was also noted during this period. The victory of national liberation movements like the winning of independence of Namibia; the agreement reached for plebiscite under UN auspices in Western Sahara; the progress being made by the ANC in the fight against apartheid and the advances being registered in the path towards total independence of South African people; the improvement in Kampuchean negotiations; weakening of insurgency in Afghanistan; the emergence of the Communist Party as the second force in Nepal; restoration of democracy and parliamentary system in Bangladesh, the improvement in Indo-Chinese and Sino-Vietnam relations etc are worth mentioning.

The Presidential address to our 7th Conference noting developments in Eastern European countries and observing their clamour for capitalism stated that "But experience alone will teach the people that such a path cannot bring in salvation, however much Western capitalist countries may be encouraging them" (Presidential speech page 4). Today we know that 40 to 50 per cent of the active work force in these countries are unemployed. A system of proper unemployment benefit is still to be introduced in these countries and therefore they are put into very serious difficulties. The prices of essentials of daily use have gone sky high which is a new experience for the people of these countries. They had enjoyed assured employment, free medical care, free, education, subsidised food and housing together with other benefits under socialism. The people who clamoured for change, through their own experience have started realising though gradually the difference between capitalism and socialism and have begun to organise resistance against the attacks on rights hitherto enjoyed by them.

Developments in the Soviet Union

In our 7th Conference we had noted the disturbing developments in the Soviet Union and noted the two conflicting forces at work one for complete disbandment of socialism, and, the other for economic reforms within the framework of socialism. We observed that we can only wait with anxiety to see the results. It also noted that "It's position as a great power vis-a-vis USA has weakened". Now

during the last 6 months the situation has further worsened in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Communist Party leader Mr Gorbachev came out with the treacherous suggestion that they will be giving up Marxism-Leninism—the ideology of the working class—and further they are going to change the Communist Party into a social democratic party. The attempt is to completely submit to bourgeois ideology and trying to facilitate capitalist change over in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, on August 19th early morning came the news that a Emergency Committee has assumed charge of the Soviet administration. This decision was taken, by the whole cabinet including the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, as admitted by Mr Yeltsin.

The progressive people hoped that this will help in strengthening the Soviet Union and the socialist system and stall its slide to disaster. During Gorbachev's absence Mr Yeltsin was daily in contact with Bush. After coming back to Moscow and assuming charge Gorbachev declared that he was resigning from the leadership of the Communist Party and recommended the dissolution of the Party Central Committee which was elected at the 27th Party Congress. In the Russian Parliament he declared that "we need a major regrouping of political forces. We need a reliable government". He has signed an agreement with Yeltsin wherein it is stated that "We have agreed that if one of us cannot carry out his duties then automatically the other immediately takes over his rights". Is it a private business venture? Mr Gorbachev and Yeltsin have mutually given their consent for inheritance to administer the Soviet Union. It is a ridiculous arrangement by all standards.

Activities of the Communist Party have been banned or suspended in many republics. Throughout the USSR anti-communist hysteria is being whipped up which is intended only to pave the way for the restoration of capitalism and weaken the resistance in defence of socialism. Communist Party offices and properties have been sealed and seized by the authorities in many republics. The chosen heir of Mr Gorbachev, Mr Yeltsin has banned the party from functioning in the factories and services in the Russian Republic. The Communist Party is under attack throughout the Soviet Union. Mr Gorbachev who is talking of legal functioning ousted Lukhyanov from the Chairmanship of the Supreme Soviet without any reference to the Supreme Soviet. This is the sort of democracy that the Western powers have been clamouring for. The so called Union Treaty which was to be signed on the 20th August contained the following dangerous provisions :

In the sphere of economy, foreign trade, banking and finances, Gorbachev gave concessions to alter the balance in favour of the republics. Taxation is given as the exclusive preserve of the republics. The central budget requires the clearance from the republics and the foreign trade is left to the control of the republics.

If this so called union treaty was signed on August 20th, it would have completely emasculated the power of the Soviet Union and with the republics being given more powers than the centre it would have definitely gone against the very existence of the Soviet Union itself. However, now, this process is being made easy by the anti-communist frenzy which is being whipped up.

The process of disintegration has already set in motion—the three Baltic Republics have already declared their independence followed by Ukraine, Byelorussia and Moldavia. Georgia and Armenia had already declared their non-acceptance of the Draft Union Treaty.

Ethnic strife within Soviet Union has also reached enormous proportions. The policy being pursued of late—disbandment of the Communist Party—closure and seizure of party offices and properties, desecration of respected and esteemed Bolshevik leaders' statues and symbols are nothing but a full scale attempt by counter revolutionary forces to roll back the history of the last 70 years.

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 radically changed the destiny of the entire mankind. It gave birth to the first socialist state, brought into existence the first non-exploitative society, liberating one sixth of the world from capitalism and other exploitative systems, embracing in it more than eight per cent of world population, thus translating into reality the cherished dream of emancipation of the oppressed, exploited and downtrodden. It sent waves of enthusiasm across the world and inspired the working class and the oppressed and enslaved people of the world to rise against exploitation and enslavement. After the emergence of Soviet Union there came into existence two worlds—one of socialism and the other of capitalism. The first socialist state—Soviet Union—from its inception has been acting as the king pin of the expanding world of democracy, freedom, peace and progress for the whole of humanity. Soviet Union with its magnificent victories in defending and developing socialism continuously defeating the game of imperialism and world reaction to suppress it, had been the main source of inspiration to the working class the world over and the liberation movements in the colonial countries.

In a short span of time after revolution in backward Russia, a powerful socialist state was built up by the Soviet people under the leadership of Com. Stalin and CPSU on the foundation laid by Com. Lenin and Bolshevik Party and registered progress with zooming speed in almost all spheres of social life, clearly establishing the superiority of socialist system on capitalism or any other system mankind has known so far.

The Soviet people and CPSU led by Com. Stalin decisively defeated the fiercest military power of that time—Nazi Germany and its axis forces—and saved

the entire humanity and prevented from setting up the clock of history backwards.

The historic anti-fascist victory paved the way for a winning spree of many a national liberation movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America, liberating the people of these countries throwing away the centuries old colonial yoke to the dust bins of history. Soviet Union, despite the fact that on its economy the war had a devastating effect, could make up for the losses in an astonishingly short period after the war and elevated its position to effectively repel and counter every threat from the imperialist forces. It was again the towering leadership of Soviet Union that served as a main source of inspiration for the Great Chinese Revolution which brought the most populous country of the world into the fold of socialism. It again gave electrifying inspiration to the peoples of backward Korea and Vietnam to brave the military might of US and other imperialist powers to give them ignominious defeat. In the post war period it was the immense assistance of Soviet Union that helped most of the newly independent countries of the Third World to resist neo-colonial exploitation that is being perpetuated on them by imperialist powers.

It helped to bring honour and prestige to the Non-Aligned Movement. And it was again that pioneer socialist state that saved the entire humanity from a nuclear holocaust by acting as the bulwark for world peace defeating the nefarious tactics of the war mongers of the imperialist camp.

Till early 50s, even though some grave mistakes were committed in the process of dealing with the problems of development of socialism in a single country, the leadership given by Soviet Union to the working class the world over and to the peace and freedom loving people of the world in their fight against exploitation and subjugation and war was unparalleled. But for this the present day world could not have achieved the amount of freedom and the level of progress and peace that exists now.

Now the new developments in the Soviet Union constitute a setback not only for socialism, but for the whole humanity since it is going back from the path they travelled for 70 years in changing the world for social progress and for the good of humanity and again now it is going backwards to capitalism leaving everything to be decided by the United States, the only super power in the world today. All the Third World countries will be put into difficulties. The world capitalist system controlled and led by the transnationals will now hold their sway in the Third World and the underdeveloped areas of the world for expansion of their market and will keep these areas backward. So again a chapter is being opened for the re-emergence of imperialism with the danger of direct intervention and suppression for the Third World.

Through internal subversion imperialism and

capitalism have succeeded in rolling several socialist countries back to capitalism. But the faith of the working class in its scientific ideology remains unshaken, undaunted. It rests upon its shoulders to unflinchingly uphold the socialist ideology. The working class will have to win back sections which may have got disillusioned by the developments during the last two years.

Though the imperialists are boasting of the benefits of capitalism, no capitalist country in the world could provide a better life for the majority of its people. Not only is unemployment on the increase in the developed capitalist countries, but massive cuts also are being engineered on the social security benefits achieved by the workers through big battles. Now an attempt is being made to cut down welfare measures under the argument that they are not contributing to improvement in production and productivity. The income of the lowest strata of the people in these countries are declining and the people living under poverty line is on the increase. The President of the US, Mr George Bush has opposed publicly the 5.5 billion dollars proposal introduced by the Democrats in the American Congress for extending the unemployment benefits for 4 more weeks. In the World Bank report it is stated that the economic crisis in the capitalist world is still continuing. Therefore, the argument that capitalism can provide a permanent alternative for the improved life of the people is wrong. It is not proved by experience and socialism has proved otherwise too. Therefore, the going back of Soviet Union to capitalism is a dangerous signal to the working class the world over and also a danger signal to the Third World countries in general. The emergence of American imperialism as the only super power in the world is a very serious development. Comrades, the capitalist countries even while being united in their onslaught against socialism, are quarrelling amongst themselves for domination. With the unification of Germany, fears of its growing economic might have arisen. The Japanese already ahead in the electronic industry have now virtually invaded the US car market, compelling the US to impose restrictions. The inter-imperialist contradiction is bound to further intensify in the coming days.

At this crucial juncture one cannot forget the fact that India, since independence deeply owes for many things for which we can really be proud of this pioneer socialist country—Soviet Union. Pakistan, with the strong backing of US imperialism, when tried to use the UN forum to tear Kashmir apart from India, it was Soviet Union who vetoed it down and it had consistently stood with us on the Kashmir issue.

The developed capitalist countries who refused to give any assistance to our efforts to build up our economy during the period immediately after independence, showed willingness to help only when Soviet Union came out with the real helping hand to provide us with core industrial sectors like steel, heavy engineering, oil, power etc which formed the

basis for a self-reliant economic development. It was the socialist Soviet Union who came for our rescue and dissipated the threat posed by the 7th Fleet of US Navy during the days of Bangladesh liberation.

The Neo-Colonial Plunder and the New Offensive

Comrades, you know that four-fifths of the world's population are living in the under-developed countries. They have still to grapple with the various kinds of backwardness accrued out of their hundreds of years of colonial past. They have just started limping towards progress. They are burdened with a colossal sum of \$ 1500 billion which they have to pay back to the World Bank and IMF. This is the case of many of the countries where the debt servicing eat away more than fifty percent of the foreign exchange earnings.

The New International Economic Order (NIEO) proclaimed by the UN envisaged 'transfer of resources from the developed areas to the underdeveloped' on the basis of mutual trust, respect for sovereignty of each nation, etc. But the World Order now being aimed at by the US is based on total negation of the above concept. Their real aim is to establish global hegemony of imperialism. The 'bank fund' is being used as a major driving force to perpetuate neo-colonial domination over the Third World by the imperialists. The idea of transfer of developed world's resources to underdeveloped areas is replaced with unequal competition. Comrades, the IMF and World Bank are organically linked. No country can borrow from the World Bank, unless it is a member of the IMF. The philosophy of IMF as shaped by the developed capitalist countries, among whom in the power structure of IMF the US possesses a unique status, is based on dogmatic prescriptions of the devaluation, liberalised trade and industrial policies, privileged treatment to foreign capital cut backs in public investment and withdrawal of all subsidies etc. This approach is closely linked to the interests of the dominant countries on the Board of IMF. The IMF's decision making structure is based on a quota system which determines the voting power. Major decisions of the Fund need a 70 per cent majority with 85 per cent of votes. The significance of the 85 per cent rule is that it gives the US, which retains 19.5% of votes, in effect veto power with the US.

Comrades, now you can see why double standards are adopted by the Bank-Fund people, while dealing with the developed countries and under-developed countries. IMF imposes no conditionalities on US and tolerated massive and chronic trade and fiscal deficits in the US, a country which now has the largest deficit in the world. But IMF is intolerant to the much smaller deficits of the Third World. Experience hitherto gained by almost all the Third World countries show that the IMF conditionalities have had on them the effect of slowing down growth, increasing dependence on the developed countries, undermining national economic institutions, cutting subsidies directed at the poor, chopping down welfare

measures, drastic reduction of real wages, etc.

The IMF has been wide off the mark in forecasts of the beneficial effects of its policies. In the Indian case the IMF's projections made at the time of 1981 loan, of the total debt, interest payment and debt servicing for the rest of the decade have totally gone wrong. The failure is documented in cases in countries like Brazil, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Jamaica, Philippines, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Lesotho, Ghana, etc some of which have already fallen into the debt trap. IMF is not oriented to tackle any of the genuine problems being faced by the Third World. It is in fact operated in a way that it is quite detrimental to the basic interests of underdeveloped countries. At present the world capitalist economy especially that of the highly industrialised countries is passing through a deep and complex crisis. The imperialist powers are trying to transfer the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the peoples of the Third World and thus to tide over the crisis while increasing attack against their own workers and people. Here I am not attempting to dilate the various aspects of the current capitalist crisis. But this very fact has been admitted, inter alia, in the World Bank's development report for the year 1991. The report says "*Increasing exposure to external influences undoubtedly puts the developing countries at risk. High industrial country fiscal deficits, potentially high international interest rates, weaknesses in the financial institutions in the United States, deterioration of some aspects of the financial situation in Japan, and protracted and inconclusive negotiations in the Uruguay round of trade talks will all take their toll*" (P.3 WB DR 1991).

It is in this background one has to view the gravity of the present situation created by the Cong (I) government by treading on a dangerous path by taking recourse to dependence on IMF loan surrendering to its humiliating conditionalities. The various aspects of the conditionalities and consequent changes made in the various policies of the government and its ongoing impact on our socio-economic life etc are dealt in detail in General Secretary's report. We have to take initiative alongwith other trade unions to mobilise the entire working class and give the lead to bring together all patriotic forces in the country to check and foil the attempt, the imperialist designs aimed at undermining our economic sovereignty, self-reliance and growth, as economy in the final analysis decides the polity. The dangers inherent in these policies threatening our very existence as an independent sovereign nation has to be brought out and widely propagated.

I have already dealt at length the immediate consequences of the setback suffered by the socialist system, the neo-colonial offensive of imperialism and the dangers inherent in toeing the IMF line by the government of India.

The secessionist challenge in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam continues unabated. Pakistani rulers

backed by US imperialism are openly aiding and abetting the separatists in Punjab and Kashmir. With the ULFA menace rising in Assam, a dangerous situation has been created in the State.

The secular character of our Republic, the very basis of the country's unity is seriously being threatened by the development of communal forces. Not only they are dividing the people on communal lines, but also threaten the unity of the working class.

With utmost contempt for democracy and democratic institutions, the Congress(I)—TUJS government in Tripura continues in its attempt to stifle the Left Front supporters. The semifascist terror unleashed by it sees no signs of respite.

Therefore, the fight for democracy, for national unity, assumes special importance. In order to meet the challenges—the attack against working class ideology, self-reliant economic development, national unity and integrity, democracy and national independence, the trade unions have to gear up and achieve the maximum possible unity. Besides, the consequences of the implementation of new economic policies will further aggravate all the ills—more closures, retrenchments, lay off, wage cut, denial or curtailment of welfare measure—will become the salient features. Hike in prices has already started which according to the present trend can even be double that of last year. The CITU should take the initiative in mobilising all the trade unions to fight back this dangerous situation.

The CITU Secretariat has already taken steps to mobilise the trade unions for common action against the IMF dictated policies pursued by the government. A convention of the Central Trade Unions is being organised on 17th Sept. for forging broadest unity and chalking out a programme of action.

It would also go in for joint action with all those progressive forces who are coming forward to fight against the impending danger to the nation. Therefore, we have decided to join hands with the Left Parties and participate in the massive demonstration at Delhi on 27th September 1991.

Comrades, the working class should stand as the front-rank fighters to counter the attacks on our national unity and the infringement of our sovereignty. Our working committee should therefore take steps and mobilise the whole working class to effectively intervene and fight back these retrograde policies.

Before I close, I wish to say by way of caution—that the totality of the situation is pregnant with serious dangers. The attack against democratic rights including the trade union rights cannot be ruled out since world imperialism has been given a greater say in our politics—reply has to be strong united resistance.

Urgency of Resisting the Present Economic and Industrial Policies

Sukomal Sen

The economic situation of the country is very grim and nobody will disagree on this point, particularly the balance of payment position has become very acute threatening the credibility of the country in relation to external debts from foreign commercial banks and other international monetary institutions. According to Government version in order to tackle the situation they are taking these steps and they call it as reform and restructuring of the economy.

Immediately after assumption of office the new Finance Minister and the erstwhile Governor of Reserve Bank of India who has close links with the World Bank and the IMF openly told the country that it was not possible for the Government to control prices as promised in the election manifesto of the ruling party and he asked the countrymen to tighten their belts as certain harsh economic measures were impending.

As a first seep, within a few days of being sworn in the office, the Government declared drastic devaluation of the Indian rupee by around 20 percent in relation to the major foreign currencies and the Finance Minister wanted the country to believe that this question was decided after deep thought and not under any pressure from IMF or the World Bank. The Finance Minister also told the country that some other harsh measures have to be taken to salvage the economy from the present critical condition. Now the Government has announced draft industrial licensing policy proposing ending licensing and control and total withdrawal of MRTP limit and also drastic liberalisation of FERA raising the limit of foreign equity shares from 40% to 51% in their investments in India and permission would be automatic. Later, Finance Minister said that in some cases there would be no limit for foreign equity shares. Withdrawal of subsidies on Fertilizers is another decision of the Government. Then the Finance Minister is on record saying that some of the public sector industries could be privatised and many sick units may be totally closed down. The Industrial Policy Resolution has confirmed this fear and the exit policy for the sick industries is nothing but to close them down.

What is alarming that the Prime Minister himself in his broadcast and telecast on 8th July, 1991 has also asked the people to tighten their belts and has said that the earlier regulations of controls and licenses had outlived themselves and he advocated decontrol and delicensing and opening the doors to multi-nationals which he claimed as the only solution to present problem. And the Finance Minister also, when asked whether he was opening the flood gates for the multi-nationals, he replied in the positive. It is no wonder that some newspapers in the United States have lauded these measures and proclamations of

the Government as revolutionary economic reforms and IMF and the World Bank had expressed their satisfaction at this.

The earlier Government transacted a loan from the IMF to the tune of three thousand three hundred crores and negotiated for a second loan. That Government also pledged or sold 21 tons of gold to foreign countries for getting some amount of money. During the regime of the earlier Government led by Mr Chandra Shekhar, demands were raised for making public the conditionalities of the IMF for granting loans to India, because it is known that IMF imposes harsh conditionalities on the recipient countries for giving loans. Unfortunately, that Government kept hush hush attitude and nothing came out in public about the conditionalities. The present ruling party, which was not in power at that time, also criticised the manner in which the then Government pledged gold for getting money, as a "sale-out". Curiously the present Government led by them already have mortgaged a total of about 48 tonnes of gold to Bank of England for getting further loans.

The present Government have been negotiating with the IMF for a huge loan to the tune of 5 to 7 billion dollars and for that IMF have imposed certain conditions. Unfortunately, the Finance Minister has come out in defending the IMF conditionalities stating that the conditionalities were natural since IMF was no charitable organisation.

The usual IMF conditionalities include :

- a) Decontrol and delicensing and ending all sorts of state intervention in the economy;
- b) Privatisation of the public sector industries;
- c) Allowing full freedom for multi-nationals to operate in the loan recipient countries;
- d) Withdrawing of subsidies whether on foods or fertilizers or any public transport or any other item essential for the benefit of the common masses and the worst of all, in devaluation of the currencies of all loan recipient countries.

Many of the countries of the world, particularly latin American countries, heavily indebted to IMF and the World Bank, have accepted all the conditionalities of these financial institutions. But, as the facts speak, these conditionalities have failed to improve the financial conditions of those countries. On the contrary, they have gone further deep into the debt trap from which it is very difficult for them to come out. What the World Bank prescribed as "market friendly attitude" has already been adopted by these countries. Unfortunately, neither the market nor the economy has become friendly to the

people and people are groaning under heavy burden of inflation, unemployment in all those countries.

So the prescriptions made by the IMF and the World Bank for recovery of the crisis ridden economy of India cannot be accepted as a panacea. On the contrary, it will subjugate the economy of the country to the will of the IMF and the World Bank and the economic sovereignty of the Indian people will be thoroughly lost. These prescriptions everywhere have led to further inflation and further unemployment and further closure of indigenous industries and further fleecing of the indigenous people by the foreign multinationals. In India too these are bound to happen, taking away the economic independence of the country.

That this is true cannot be doubted at all. The measures announced by the Government immediately after assuming office have been done when the new elected Parliament was about to meet but strangely the Parliament was not allowed to discuss on these measures. Thus the Parliament which represents the sovereign will of the people was deprived of the right to express their opinion on all these basic measures. As the World Bank and the IMF dictated, the Finance Minister simply obediently followed it without allowing the Parliament and even his own Cabinet to have any say in the matter. If this is not the glarest example of the loss of economic independence of the country, then what else ?

Later on when the Government placed the Railway and General Budgets before the Parliament, they tried to ensure that the IMF conditionalities are implemented through these budgets. 20% rise in petrol prices and rise in prices of other commodities and in the fares and freight charges of the Railways are cases in point.

The next question comes as to who is responsible for the economic mess. Now the common people are being asked to tighten their belts and to be ready for the sacrifices. But for what? Today according to published figures, the net external debt of the country stands at about the staggering figure of one lakh crores of rupees. In 1966 and 1981 loans from IMF were taken but they could not solve the economic crisis of the country and then the Government desperately went in for borrowing from foreign commercial banks and thus India inherits an amount of loan to the tune of 1 lakh crores of rupees which scares every body. The main problem at the present moment is about balance of payment crisis. But as the experience says, the Government has most irresponsibly squandered away the hard earned foreign exchange for importing the parts of Maruti car and other host of luxury items which were not indispensable for the country's growth and which were designed to cater only to the needs of small elite group of the country. And then the Government is importing huge quantity of steel and coal while our own steel plants are made to work much below their capacity and the crying needs of their modernisation are still not being paid

any heed to. Even the extraction of coal has been kept at a low level necessitating the import of coal from other countries although according to the estimates India has enough coal reserves to cater to the needs of the country. Similar is the case in respect of extraction of oil. The country is importing huge quantity of PDL while the country's oil reserves are largely remaining unexplored. Umpteen number of instances can be cited as to how unwise and elitist policy of Government have led to the squandering away of foreign exchange ultimately resulting in the present economic crisis.

Therefore the circumstances lead one to the conclusion that the present crisis and the suffering of the people is the result of wrong and harmful economic policies that successive Governments have been following, particularly since 1984. This is the cumulative result of years of mishandling of the economy of the country. Moreover, the Government has not made any attempt to tap the internal market of the vast country inhabited by as many as 85 crores of people. The purchasing capacity of the vast rural population has not been allowed to increase as the Government have refused to introduce any basic land reforms in the country. Only in one or two states which are or were ruled by the left parties have brought about some praiseworthy land reforms within the present constitutional limitations with visible beneficial results. Moreover for the last few years, strengthening, the public sector, the public distribution system, etc. which guarantee self-reliance of the economy and some relief to the common people, have been systematically denigrated. Labour intensive industries which can absorb huge army of unemployed in the country have been contemptuously neglected with the fascinating of hi-tech industries. No well thought-out direction has been given as to what is the appropriate technology for a country like India which can both modernise the industries as well as absorb the unemployed labour force. Thus irresponsible and reckless economic and industrial policies have landed the country to the present state of formidable crisis.

In view of this situation it is imperative now that the measures announced by the Government be immediately revoked and to tackle the present economic situation the following measures among others be adopted forthwith :

- (a) To stop all unnecessary import of luxury goods which have no relevance to the living of common masses.
- (b) To unearth the huge amounts of black money that are operating as a parallel economy in the country;
- (c) To collect all arrears of tax payments being evaded by the industrialists, businessmen and other richer sections of the people.
- (d) Instead of increasing indirect taxes, the Government should increase direct taxes asking

the richer sections of the people to bear the burden;

(e) Increase corporate taxes, and the extra profits for the monopoly concerns should be mopped up and deposited in the state exchequer;

(f) To stop all wasteful expenditure of different Government departments, etc

(g) To take urgent steps for self-reliance in respect of steel, coal, oil etc so that the scarce foreign exchange can be saved by stopping import of these items and strengthen the public sector; and

(h) To introduce basic land reforms to boost up rural economy and thus expand the internal market.

These measures can only result in reduction of fiscal deficit and stop depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

It is now very clear to the workers and employees of the country that the burden of these economic measures are surely going to fall on them only and even the Government may go to the extent of freezing their wages and other benefits in the name of tightening their belts. Therefore, it is urgently necessary that all workers and employees to rise in protest and build up united struggle to resist the economic onslaughts that have come down upon them. Simultaneously it is also a warning to the toiling masses that the economic measures dictated by the IMF and the World Bank and other international agencies are bound to give birth to right wing political measures. It means that simultaneously with these harshest of economic measures, harshest of attacks on the trade unions and democratic rights are also impending. So the workers and employees have to doubly cautious and close their ranks and build up united struggles accordingly.

Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers (Base 1982 = 100)

	June 1991	July 1991	Linking factor for Old base								
				Belgaum	219	221	—	Varanasi	231	237	5.12
				Hubli-Dharwar	213	216	—	Asansol	205	207	4.77
				Mercara	195	200	—	Calcutta	212	220	4.74
				Alwaye	195	198	5.19	Darjeeling	191	196	4.55
				Mundakayam	200	206	4.67	Durgapur	216	224	—
				Quilon	210	208	—	Haldia	221	231	—
<i>Centre</i>				Trivandrum	208	219	—	Howrah	225	233	4.12
ALL-INDIA	209	214	4.93	Bhalghat	208	217	5.24	Jalpaiguri	192	199	4.16
Gudur	190	197	4.33	Bhilai	192	193	3.49	Raniganj	197	201	4.40
Guntur	203	208	5.60	Bhopal	218	222	5.46	Chandigarh	209	218	—
Hyderabad	199	204	5.23	Indore	219	227	5.18	Delhi	215	221	4.97
Visakhapatnam	209	210	—	Jabalpur	223	228	6.41	Pondicherry	228	232	—
Warrangal	204	202	—	Bombay	229	228	5.12				
Doisom-Dooma-				Nagpur	219	224	4.99	Additional Series of Labour Bureau			
Tinasukia	194	197	4.05	Nasik	228	231	—	Kothagudem	223	225	3.25
Gauhati	202	207	—	Pune	215	219	—	Himachal Pradesh	199	205	3.75
Labac-Silchar	194	196	3.96	Sholapur	226	227	5.03	Bhilwara	213	220	3.20
Mariani-Jorhat	204	206	3.95	Barbil	201	203	5.00	Chindwara	214	220	2.59
Rangapara-Tezpur	205	209	4.29	Rourkela	191	194	3.59	Tripura	217	222	4.37
Jamshedpur	199	202	4.68	Amritsar	197	205	5.19	Goa	222	224	3.40
Jharia	194	200	4.63	Ludhiana	199	207	—				
Kodarma	187	193	5.43	Ajmer	213	222	5.01	Other Series of Labour Bureau			
Monghyr	204	202	5.29	Jaipur	205	215	5.17				
Noamundi	195	197	4.58	Coimbatore	197	196	5.35	<i>Centre</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>Apr.</i>
Ranchi-Hatia	207	211	—	Coonoor	216	220	4.80		1991	1991	
Ahmedabad	213	219	4.78	Madras	207	211	5.05	Ammathi	1960	873	895
Baroda	215	218	—	Maduri	210	215	5.27	Chickmagalur	1960	887	894
Bhavnagar	217	225	4.99	Salem	193	195	—	Kolar Gold Field	1960	910	914
Rajkot	212	218	—	Tiruchirapally	210	217	—	Gwalior	1960	1022	1025
Surat	228	233	—	Agra	208	214	—	Sambalpur	—	—	—
Faridabad	197	205	—	Ghaziabad	209	212	—	Berhampur	—	—	—
Yamunanagar	198	203	5.53	Kanpur	218	224	4.69	Cuttack	—	—	—
Srinagar	202	203	5.47	Saharanpur	203	210	5.06				
Bangalore	205	208	5.66								

Note : Figures on old base can be obtained by multiplying the Index Number on New Base by the linking factor given and rounding off the result to nearest whole number.

—Dash denotes new centres under 1982 series.

Appeal from the WFTU

[The WFTU has made an appeal to the World trade unions to protest against the Czechoslovakian Government's order to WFTU to stop its activities from Prague as its Head Quarters. We are publishing here under the appeal by the WFTU and the protest telegramme sent by the CITU to the Czechoslovakian Government—Ed.]

On 4 September 1991, the secretariat of the WFTU received a letter from the ministry of the interior in Czechoslovakia, informing it of its decision to withdraw the permission given to the WFTU to base itself and its activities on Czechoslovakian soil.

This comes only five months after the same ministry authorised the WFTU in writing to base itself and carry out its activities in Czechoslovakia, declaring in particular that "as a result of our investigation, it has not been proved that the WFTU has carried out any activities which might merit withdrawal of authorisation..."

We cannot but express our absolute astonishment at such a change of attitude, all the more so since the new arguments employed on this occasion are of a purely political nature, and take no account whatsoever of the activities developed by the WFTU, particularly since the XIIth World Trade Union Congress, held in Moscow in November 1990.

Democracy and the plurality of opinions are at stake. Trade union rights, and the ability of workers throughout the world to organise and defend themselves, are under threat.

It is imperative that there be a rapid and broadly united reaction from the whole trade union movement throughout the world. The previous campaign of protests by the trade union movement worldwide to the Czechoslovak authorities ensured the continuing presence of the WFTU in Czechoslovakia. The trade union movement should refuse to allow itself

to be betrayed by a renewed attack on one of its achievements.

In the name of workers' interests, in the name of democracy, and in the name of trade union freedom for all, the secretariat of the WFTU appeals to the trade union movement worldwide to swiftly register its protests with the Czechoslovak government, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations, asking that the WFTU be allowed to remain in Czechoslovakia as it desires.

Addresses:

—Dr. Marian Calfa,
Prime Minister of the
Federal Govt.
nabr. kpt. Jarose 4
110 00 Prague 1-CSFR

—Mr. Michel Hansenne,
ILO Director General
4 route des Morrillons
CH 1211 Geneva
22-Switzerland

—Ing. Jan Langos,
Federal Minister of
Interior
POB 21
Nad stolou 3
17034 Prague 7-CSFR

—Mr. Jan Martenson,
UN Deputy Sec General
UN European Office
Palais des Nations
CH 1211 Geneva
10-Switzerland

Massive Rally by Left-NF Parties

A massive rally of over one million, the biggest in recent years, was held at Boat Club, New Delhi on September 27, 1991. The rally was called by the Left-National Front jointly to voice protest against the new economic and industrial policies of the minority Congress (I) Government of Narasimha Rao. Workers, peasants, students, youth and women came from all the states of India to join the rally. A huge procession started from Red Fort and converged at Boat Club with red and green flags of the Left parties and the Janata Dal, and banners and placards.

Among those who spoke were H K S Surjeet, Saifuddin Chowdhury (CPI-M), Chaturanan Mishra, Indrajit Gupta (CPI), Nani Bhattacharya (RSP), Chitta Basu (FB), N T Rama Rao (TDP), Smt. Mustafa (Cong-S) and V P Singh, Ram Vilas Paswan, Lallo Prasad Yadav, Sharad Yadav and Mufti Mohammad Syeed (Janata Dal). The rally unanimously adopted a resolution with a 11-point demand against price rise, closures, privatisation, IMF loan, for workers' participation in management, for land reforms and remunerative prices to the peasants, against atrocities against dalits, minorities and women, etc.

In another resolution the rally extended full support to the countrywide industrial strike on Nov. 29 called by the trade unions and gave a clarion call to intensify the united struggles to force the Government to reverse the policies. (Detailed report will be published in the next issue—Ed.)

Telegramme by CITU

September 12, 1991

Dr. Marian Calfa
Prime Minister of the Federal Government
Nabr Kpt Jarose 4
110 00 Prague
Czech and Slovak Federal Republics

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions strongly protests at the arbitrary withdrawal of the permission to World Federation of Trade Unions to function its Head Quarters at Prague stop the reasons given by your Government are totally unfounded and amounts to suppression of Trade Union and democratic rights of the working class stop. We urge upon your Government to respect Trade Union rights and allow continuation of WFTU activities from Prague as before.

M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary
CITU

AIREC Dharna at Boat Club

A massive dharna was staged at the Boat Club Maidan, Delhi at the call of the All India Railway Employees Confederation to press their two-point demands, viz, vacation of all victimisation and restoration of negotiation channel to the AIREC. It is now widely known that several hundred railway employees out of nearly a thousand who were victimised for trade union activity mostly in the early eighties (a number of them were victimised later during the course of the past decade) are yet to get back their jobs. The AIREC has been agitating over years for their reinstatement. Shri George Fernandez, the Railway Minister in the NF Govt. had issued orders for their reinstatement immediately before the ouster of the Government, but it was not implemented by the Railway administration, i.e. the Railway Board. The AIREC staged a massive dharna on 13th March, 1991, during the tenure of Chandra Sekhar Government. Shri Janeshwar Mishra, the Railway Minister of that period gave assurance about their reinstatement. But he too did not succeed as the Railway Board continued to put up resistance. Once again after the installation of the new Govt the AIREC approached its Railway Minister for settlement of this long pending issue. But no positive response was forthcoming as months were rolling by. It is in these circumstances that the organisation decided to stage dharna on 10th September to further press their demand.

About 3000 railway workers from all over the country took part in the dharna. Besides the leadership of AIREC, the gathering was addressed by PK Ganguly and Kanai Banerjee, both secretaries of CITU, Shri Krishna of AITUC, and members of Parliament namely Basudev Acharya, Indrajit Gupta, Chandrajit Yadav, A Singh, and Prakash Singh. The memorandum addressed to the speaker of Lok Sabha was handed over to Basudev Acharya.

Special mention of issue was made in the Lok Sabha by Basudev Acharya who was supported by other MPs. The Railway Minister Shri Jaffar Sharif said in reply that the matter has been put up before the Cabinet with his recommendations.

Dharna of Ticket Checking Staff: At the call of the Indian Railways Ticket Checking Staff Association Dharna was staged at the Head Quarters of Zonal Rlys on 6th Sept. 1991 to press their outstanding demands. About 150 ticket checking staff sat in dharna at the South Eastern Railway Head Quarters. About 120 staff took part in Dharna at the E. Rly Head Quarters. At Baroda House, N. Rly, near about 80 workers sat in dharna, which was addressed by Basudev Acharya MP, S K Dhar, N S Bhangoo, Secretary General AIREC.

Divisional Demonstration on 27th Sept: The AIREC has decided to stage demonstration at all

Divisional Head Quarters of Indian Railways to voice protest against the economic policies of the Govt of India, its surrender to IMF and World Bank.

National Conference of Engineering Workers: The National Conference of Railway Engineering Workers was held in Delhi, at the community Hall at Panchkuian Road on 9th Sept 1991. It was held under the auspices of the All India Railway Employees Confederation (AIREC) The conference was organised to bring together several organisations of railway engineering workers to form one all India organisation in the fold of the AIREC. About 300 delegates from seven railway zones attended the conference.

The conference was inaugurated by C M Singh, President AIREC. N S Bhangoo, Secretary General AIREC who was the convener of the Preparatory Committee for organising the conference reported to the conference the efforts made by AIREC to organise the unorganised sections of railway workers including the engineering workers who are among the most exploited sections in the railways. The conference was addressed by M L Banerjee, General Secretary IRTWA, M N Prasad, Jt Secretary General, AILRSA and by Uday Chatterjee, Amal Bose and T Venkateshwaran, Zonal Secretaries of AIREC, S.E, Eastern and Southern Railways respectively. It was also addressed among others by S K Singh of N Railway and K K Dhar of NF Railway.

About 20 delegates took part in the discussion in the course of which they raised all the essential issues and demands relating to engineering workers, which are pending for years. They expressed happiness and thanked the AIREC leadership for their efforts to organise engineering workers on all India plane.

A sub-committee formed for the purpose drafted a comprehensive charter of demands and the resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the conference. The sub-committee has further been entrusted with preparing a draft constitution for the all India organisation which was declared as having been formed in the conference.

The conference unanimously elected an executive committee of 13 members with G P Mishra as President, A K Biswas as Working President, Bishwarup Chatterjee as General Secretary and Benimadhala Das and Prasantha Tewari as Joint Secretaries. In his concluding speech, S K Dhar, Secretary General of AILRSA stressed the importance of unity among engineering workers.

The proceedings of the conference was conducted by a presidium consisting of G P Mishra, A K
(Cont'd on page 24)

Cement Workers' Convention Demands Bipartite Wage Settlement

Kanai Banerjee

The All India Cement Workers' Convention held at Delhi on 5th September 1991 under the joint auspices of the CITU, AITUC, and HMS resolved to carry on determined struggle unitedly to force the Government and the Industry to introduce the system of bipartite wage settlement involving all the Trade unions in the field in place of the extant practice of so called arbitration based on a collusion between the Cement Manufacturers Association and INTUC sponsored federation of Cement workers which has been most arbitrarily granted the status of sole bargaining agent, completely ignoring the other trade unions which together enjoy the support of the major sections of the workers. The convention also demanded that all wage settlements must cover the workers of the mini-cement plants as well.

Back Ground

In spite of persistent protest by other trade union centres the collaboration between the management of the cement industry and the INTUC sponsored federation has been going on for decades with the support of the Congress(I) Governments at the centre depriving over a lakh of workers engaged in the industry of legitimate wages and ensuring fabulous profit for the cement magnets. Joint conventions organised in the past by the four Central Trade Unions namely the CITU, AITUC, HMS and BMS and efforts made for introduction of bipartite wage settlement involving all trade unions did not produce desired effect. It is in this background, with the expiry of the extant "settlement" drawing near—it will expire on March 31, 1992—that the representatives of the above four trade union centres met on June 15 to decide fresh course of action to put an end to the present deplorable state of affair in the cement industry. The consensus that emerged from the preliminary discussion was that an all India convention would be organised in late August or early September 1991 for adopting a programme of vigorous movement to press the demands and at the same time preparing the workers for strike in the event of the demand not being conceded. However, the BMS informed later that before fixing the date for a convention they needed more discussion for further clarification on the objective of the joint effort. The CITU agreed with the AITUC and HMS that further discussion would mean delay in holding the convention while the matter brooked no delay. In the circumstances CITU, AITUC and HMS decided to hold the convention on 5th September with door kept open for the BMS to join the united movement as and when it would suit them.

The proceedings of the convention which was attended by delegates from all the three trade union centres and from all the states where there are cement units were conducted by a presidium consisting of Kanai Banerjee, Secretary, CITU T. N. Siddhanta, Secretary AITUC and Veereshwar Tiagi, Secretary HMS.

After introduction of the draft declaration on behalf of the presidium, M.K. Pandhe, General Secretary CITU explained in details the situation prevailing in the cement industry and gave suggestion on the task before the non-INTUC trade unions in the industry. The draft charter of demand was moved by H.N. Narendraprasad, General Secretary, Cement Workers Federation. A large number of delegates participated in a lively discussion on the two documents, whereafter the declaration was adopted along with a programme. The draft charter of demand has been referred to a committee set up by the convention for the finalisation of the charter.

Dalla Workers' Struggle

Development in connection with attempted handing over of the Dalla Cement Factory to the Dalmias by the UP Cement Corporation (a U.P. Government undertaking), the workers' organised protest, brutal firing on the workers by the UP police killing and injuring a large number of workers, the struggle which is still being waged heroically by the workers were narrated in details by Amanulla Khan delegate from the Dalla factory.

The declaration adopted in the convention called upon all the unions to extend all support to the struggle of the Dalla workers, to collect fund in aid of the workers including the families of the victims of police firing, to send telegramme to the chief Minister of UP and the Prime Minister, with copy to the Ekta Samity of Dalla Workers demanding abrogation of privatisation of the plants and end of police repression, release of those arrested etc. A trade union delegation will visit Dalla and meet the UP Chief Minister.

Other Programmes

The Convention also called upon the unions to observe Demands Week from 21st to 26th October 1991 to popularise the demands of cement workers and asked them to prepare for effective struggle to get the demands fulfilled and also for strike if the management and the Government refuse to concede the legitimate demands.

The Convention further called upon all cement workers and unions to take part in the struggle of the working class of the country against the anti-worker, anti-people and anti-national economic policies of the Government.

The Convention decided to form a Coordination Committee with two representatives each from the three central trade unions to carry forward the united struggle of cement workers. It expressed the hope that all trade unions, those which could not take part in the convention, including the INTUC, will join the united effort for a just and most rational ordering of the industrial relations in the cement industry.

Against Privatisation of Dalla Cement Factory Struggle Takes New Turn

P. K. Ganguly

The valiant struggle of the workers demanding revocation of the privatisation of the UP Cement Corporation, comprising of the three units of Dalla, Chunar and Churk took a new turn on 26th August, when all the workers' unions and the officers' associations in the three units started a dharna near the State Assembly at Lucknow with the family members demanding an interview with the Chief Minister.

It is to be recalled that about 40 workers were killed by police firing at Dalla on June 2 while resisting the physical handover of the factory by the erstwhile Mulayam Singh Government to the Dalmias. The grim struggle continues since then with the five point demands for revocation of the privatisation order, judicial enquiry into the firing, compensation of Rupees two lakhs to the families of the killed and Rs. 50 thousands to the injured, suspension of the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of the Police and release of arrested workers and withdrawal of the cases.

Fake Assurance by the BJP Government

The BJP Government which came after the elections, promised to review the entire decisions taken by the Mulayam Singh Government. The Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao also promised to a delegation of the CITU led by Samar Mukherjee to look into the matter. But all the promises turned to be fake. Only the DM and SP were transferred.

The workers refused to take wages from the Dalmias. Complete strike has been continuing in all the three units. The UP State CITU took state-wide action programmes which culminated in a massive central rally at Lucknow on August 2. Solidarity actions were taken by the CITU and the public sector unions all over the country on the day. Md. Amin MP (CPI-M), and Kanai Banerjee, Secretary CITU, addressed the rally at Lucknow. However, the Chief Minister did not give any interview to the delegation led by Md. Amin. They met the State Labour Minister who repeated the fake assurances to the delegation.

Dharna at Lucknow

The CITU called for relief fund to help the Dalla workers. Responding to the call, unions and workers from various places have started contributing to the relief fund.

All the unions irrespective of affiliations and the officers' associations in the three units in the mean time formed an Ekta Samity to carry forward the struggle. The BJP MLA from Robertsgunj cast his lot with the Ekta Samity. This made a division in the BJP and the BMS, which actually supported the privatisation and Dalmias. The Dalmias during the

period tried to forcibly run the units with outsiders with the help of the police and the BJP Government. The workers and the officers who are in constant vigil, repeatedly foiled the attempts of the Dalmias, getting arrested in hundreds in the process.

To step up the struggle about 2,500 workers and officers came down to Lucknow on 26th August with their families to start an indefinite dharna before the State Assembly demanding an interview with the Chief Minister, who had refused to meet any delegation so far. Over two thousand workers however remained at Dalla to guard the factory and prevent the entry of the Dalmias. Despite heavy rains and near starvation, the workers and their families remained undaunted with the continuous dharna.

On 29th August one worker, Nepali, died of hunger and exposer. P K Ganguly, Secretary, CITU visited Lucknow on the day and went to the dharna place with the State CITU leadership and talked to the Ekta Samity leaders and the workers. A large number of workers under the leadership of Subhasini Ali had gathered at the hospital, where the worker had died. The plan was to carry the dead body of the worker in a procession for cremation. But later at night, the situation became tense when the police refused to give permission for the procession or hand over the body to the family. Hundreds of workers alongwith Subhasini Ali were arrested at dead of night and whisked away in a jail several miles away from Lucknow. The police then poured petrol on the body and burnt it. Three CPI(M) Members of Parliament, viz, Sunil Basu Roy, Shivaji Patnaik and Haradhan Roy were rushed to Lucknow on August 31. They met the Governor. The arrogant Chief Minister first refused to meet them, but ultimately was forced to do so in the late evening. Subhasini Ali and other workers were ultimately released.

Jail Bhara Programme

The Secretariat of the State CITU met in an emergent meeting on August 29 and decided to take a programme of Jail Bhara throughout the State to press the demand of revocation of the privatisation order. They discussed with the Ekta samity to step up the united struggle in this direction. The UP Government in the meantime offered a compensation of Rs. 25 thousands to the wife of Nepali, which she refused. The workers continued the dharna with more determination. The Chief Minister yet refused to meet any delegation. Ultimately however he deputed the State Education Minister to talk with the delegation of the Ekta Samity on 8th September. The Government wanted time upto 30th September, by which time it assured to take "posi-

tive" actions. The dharna was withdrawn on this assurance. But the Ekta Samity decided to launch the agitation again from October 2, if the Chief Minister fails to accede to the demands.

Supreme Court Rejects Petition by Dalmias

In the meantime the case is going on at the Allahabad High Court. The High Court had ordered a fresh valuation of the assets of the three units, which was done by a private Assessor, viz. Billimoria & Co. at Rs 770 crores. The Dalmias made a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the Supreme Court challenging the High Court Order. They appointed Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the former notorious Chief Minister of West Bengal during the semi-fascist period, the former Governor of Punjab and the present Congress(I) president of West Bengal to argue their case. Hardev Singh and Venugopal argued on behalf of the workers and officers. The Supreme Court dismissed the SLP filed by the Dalmias and referred the case back to the High Court.

All India Support by T.U. Convention

The Working Committee meeting of the CITU held at Delhi from September 1 to 3 adopted a resolution reiterating its call for countrywide solidarity actions in support of the Dalla workers' grim struggle and for relief fund. The all India convention of public sector workers and the all India Trade Union Convention held at Delhi on September 16 and 17 also deliberated the issue in the context of the action plans against the economic policies of the Government and against privatisation of the public sector units and called for all India support to the struggle demanding revocation of the privatisation order. The struggle is bound to acquire new heights with the all India support. To further the cause of the struggle, the CITU in an all India meeting of the Cement workers' union held at Delhi on 4th September, has decided to publish a pamphlet on the Dalla workers' struggle.

Dalla Martyrs

According to eye witness account quite a large number of workers were killed in police firing at Dalla. For the obvious reason of hiding the magnitude of their crime the police gives a ridiculously small figure. The atmosphere of terror created by the police prevented the workers to ascertain the actual number and other particulars of the victims. Following is an incomplete list of the Dalla martyrs:

1. Sailendra Kumar Roy
2. Balgobind
3. Ramadev
4. Surendra Dubey
5. Ramnaresh
6. Jayprakash alias Rajesh Tripathi
7. Deena
8. Rampeare Kushaha
9. Ramdhari

CITU Condemns the Lackadaisical Attitude of the Government towards Strike by ONGC Employees

The Secretariat of CITU has issued the following statement to the press on September 13 :

The CITU expresses its strong resentment over the indifferent attitude of the Central Government towards the indefinite strike launched by the employees of ONGC from 9th Sept' 91 all over the country.

The news of murder of the ONGC officer Shri T. S. Raju by the ULFA extremists on 8.9.91 was received with great shock by the CITU and it condemns the government for its failure to get Shri Raju released from the captivity of the extremists.

Considering the serious situation created by the ULFA extremists at Assam and failure of the State and Central governments to contain the situation and ensure security of life of the people in the state, the CITU is in agreement with the ONGC employees in their feeling of insecurity and apprehension of further attack on them. CITU demands that the government must ensure the safety and security of the ONGC employees posted at the extremist ridden locations upto their fullest satisfaction.

CITU demands that the government must take all necessary steps to secure release of the employees of ONGC still under the captivity of the extremists. While conveying its condolence to the bereaved family members, it demands payment of adequate compensation to the heir of Shri Raju. CITU also expresses its sympathy to the family members of the employees still under captivity.

The CITU is of the firm view that the loss suffered by the nation on oil and petroleum production due to the strike is solely the responsibility of the government because of its lackadaisical attitude. Without taking necessary step to remove the just apprehension of the employees, simple appeal to end the strike does not make any sense.

In the end CITU hopes that government will take prompt effective action to end the strike by taking the striking ONGC employees into full confidence on the question of their security of lives.

(From page 21)

Biswas and Bishwadip Chatterjee.

Trade Union Class : A trade union class was organised by the LRSA, SE Rly at Nagpur on 22nd August in which 60 trade union functionaries of different categories participated. Sukomal Sen MP who was the main speaker spoke on the history of working class movement including railway trade union movement. Besides M L Banerjee, General Secretary IRTWA and S K Dhar Secretary General AILRSA, spoke on technological upgradation on Railways and history of loco running staff movement. Concluding speech was delivered by M N Prasad, Zonal Secretary LRSA, SE Rly.

Promotion of Collective Bargaining for Working Women

A meeting of the trade unions for promoting collective bargaining of women workers was held on 29th August at Delhi. The meeting was convened by the Union Labour Ministry. It was attended by the representatives of CITU, INTUC, TUCC, NFITU and NLO. Pramila Pandhe attended the meeting on behalf of AICCWW (CITU).

Ms Shashi Jain, Jt. Secretary, Ministry of Labour presided over the meeting. Ms. Kanta Sood, INTUC spoke about the women's wing and its functioning. Ms. Indira Saxena (HMS) emphasised on the shocking working conditions in match factories at Shivkashi in Tamilnadu where a large number of women and children are working.

Pramila Pandhe highlighted the plight of women workers in garment factories in Delhi, where they are not paid wages as recommended by Delhi Administration. They are sexually assaulted by the goondas of management. In Anganwadi under Central Social Welfare Board, thousands of women are working as workers and helpers. They have to work for 10-12 hours per day on paltry amount of Rs 300/- and Rs 110/- per month. They are harassed by CDPO officials drawing huge salaries. The workers are abused by the officials with filthy charges of stealing the nutrition food sanctioned for the children. In Social Welfare Centre under Delhi administration, women working as piece-rate workers for the last 40 years are denied benefits available to Government employees. The union is constantly demanding their regularisation of pension after attaining 65 years of age.

Regarding Child labour 80 percent are below 14 years of age. Unless the Government increases the minimum wages to the parents of these children and provide free education to the children, the Child Labour Act cannot be implemented. In beedi and plantations the women workers are not given equal wages. The Air India hostesses are discriminated and forced to do the ground work after attaining the age of 45, violating the Equal Remuneration Act but the Government does not take any action against the management. Another shocking matter is when a hostess becomes pregnant, she is grounded without job and her salary is cut till she delivers a baby. She is entitled for a salary for the period of three months only.

While concluding, Pramila Pandhe drew the attention towards the coal mines where thousands of women were retrenched due to mechanisation as per recommendations of Baweja Committee. In all these cases collective bargaining is totally subverted.

Miss Baggi (NFITU) said that more seminars should be organised to educate the workers about

their problems. D.D. Shastri (TUCC) said that unless there is socio-economic changes in the condition of poor people, we cannot talk about banning child labour. The NLO representative explained the conditions of the textile workers in Ahmedabad due to the closures of mills. We have so many times given representations to the Industry Ministry but nothing has been done in this regard, she said.

It was decided that the next meeting will be called in November on this issue.

Samyukta Sangharsh Samiti Delegation Meets the Finance Minister

A delegation on behalf of NFTU, AITUC, CITU, HMS and other organisations working among women in Anganwadi all over India met Shri Manmohan Singh, the Finance Minister demanding minimum wages pending regularisation or temporary increase in the honorarium. Com. Samar Mukherjee MP led the delegation. Com. Rajhansa from the HMS Anganwadi union and Vimal Ranadive from the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers & Helpers explained in detail the worsening conditions of Anganwadi workers and helpers who get an honorarium of Rs. 250-300 and Rs. 110 only when the prices of essential commodities are going sky high. Smt Rajkumari, president of NFTU, herself a worker narrated the appalling condition of the women working in the ICDS Scheme which was substantiated by Mr Hukum Singh of NFTU.

Smt Geeta Mukherjee MP received reply to her question where the Finance Minister stated that "the existing rates of honoraria would have to be accommodated within the existing outlay either by a simultaneous reduction in the number of these workers or by reducing the coverage and/or the number of beneficiaries under the programme".

Com. Samar Mukherjee, MP, intervening in the discussion said it was the duty of the Govt to help these women when the government decided to have the ICDS scheme for rural areas. When asked what should the delegation tell the Anganwadi women, Shri Manmohan Singh said that he would inform only after 2 months whether he will be able to pay the increase.

Asian Trade Union Seminar

Jibon Roy

The All China Federation of Trade Unions recently convened an International Seminar on Role of Trade Unions on Development & Employment. The seminar was held at Guangzhou, the capital of the most industrialised province of China, Guangdong from 26th to 31st August 1991. It was attended by representatives from major trade unions from most of the underdeveloped countries in Asia.

Significant Move

In view of the ideological handicaps in WFTU in mobilising the anti-imperialist forces together, the current initiative of ACFTU is a significant move in setting a new direction for trade union unity in underdeveloped countries. The CITU delegation which attended the 12th Congress of the WFTU in November 1990 had in course of discussions with the Chinese delegation given the idea of holding a seminar of Asian Trade Unions. The special status which All China Federation of Trade Unions was enjoying for not having officially affiliated with the WFTU and maintaining relations with a number of regional trade unions in Asia, irrespective of their international affiliations, has been an extra leverage in convening the seminar by ACFTU.

In course of my talk with the ACFTU leadership I came to know that invitations were sent to almost all the trade unions and regional organisations. Most of such organisations turned up in the seminar. Since it was intended by the organisers to restrict the participation within the undeveloped countries, Japanese Trade Unions had been left out. Nine Central Trade Unions from India which included CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCC and BMS attended the seminar. From Bangladesh all the national trade unions were invited and all except the union led by the ruling party did attend. Pakistan was represented by four trade union centers which included Pakistan Trade Union Federation which follows class ideology in trade union movement. Others from the country were mostly religious outfits. Five organisations from Philippines, two from Singapore, one from Indonesia, five from Sri Lanka, seven from Malaysia, two from Thailand besides trade unions from DPRK, Mongolia and Laos had participated. The notable absentee was Vietnamese Trade Unions. It could not be ascertained whether they were invited or not. Representatives from WETU and APTUC were present. From China ACFTU had been represented by five comrades. The number of total participation was slightly over sixty. ACFTU made wonderful arrangements to make the seminar a grand success. The Secretarial and other arrangements were made with minutest details under the overall supervision of Com. Qian Dodong, Director of International Depart-

ment. Staying and other arrangements had been excellent as per the Chinese tradition.

Two in One

Seminar had been divided into two parts. While the main deliberations took place in the plenary session which was inaugurated on 26th evening, opportunity was given for detailed study of Chinese way of development by way of on the spot visits of different types of industrial enterprises.

Plenary Session

A five member presidium consisting of four vice president, i.e. INTUC (India), General Federation of Trade Unions of Korea (DPRK), All Indonesian Workers Union (Indonesia), one from Philippines Trade Union and Chairman representing ACFTU (China) conducted the deliberations. Com. Ni Zi Fu, the Chairman, ACFTU and Vice Chairman, National Standing Committee made the inaugural address. He phrased the international situation as 'tense' and 'volatile'. He mentioned about widening wealth gap between North and South and consequent decline of living standards in South. Then he narrated the economic programme adopted in China. He claimed that the problem of food and clothing had been overcome in China. If the current trend of growth could be maintained which is expected to be possible, by mid of the next century China would reach the height of a developed industrialised country, he stated.

Speeches made before the plenary session by different delegates in presenting their papers carried diverse opinions. Most of the papers had little relevance to the subject of the seminar. Still the basic issues which tormented the development process in Third World countries came into focus both in the plenary discussions and the group discussions. Self-reliance and the increasing danger of multinational penetration came to prominence in the deliberations. Similarly, a number of speakers made out that in any underdeveloped country, if the GDP growth is not duly reflected in raising the living standards of the mass of the people, the growth pattern gets deformed, hence cannot be termed as development. Delegates were unanimous that the development must be linked with the employment growth. Similarly, concern was expressed on the declining employment opportunities in general and specially amongst women, about the growing rate of child labour etc.

Development Strategy be Linked with Basic Need

On behalf of CITU an elaborate study paper was presented by me in the seminar. The thrust of the

paper was that any growth process which is not linked with employment orientation and which fails to maintain continual improvement of living standard of mass of the people is not worth to be named as development. The paper argued that no path of economic development, socialism or capitalism what soever, can forge ahead ignoring the matter of equitable distribution. China with socialism as the main plank of economic development maintained an unprecedented growth in all standards. The rulers in India, to the contrary, denying to plough back even a part of the appropriated resources to the mass of the people had landed the country to an unprecedented crisis. The paper quoted the World Bank report 1990 which has put India's army of paupers at 420 millions which is just 50% of India as quoted in the report. The recent report of the Planning Commission on unemployment says that the growth rate of employment in India has fallen from 2.82% during 1972-78 to 1.55% per annum during 1983-88. Getting recoiled with the limping rate of demand growth, the process of economic growth which had been witnessed during fifties or even during sixties lost its accelerating strength in subsequent period. In support of this contention the paper advanced the declining growth rate of finished steel production which maintained a steady rate of 9.5% during 1951-1960, then scaled down to 6.8% during sixties and dipped to 3.9% during seventies and total stagnation during eighties.

The paper claimed that the fabulous industrial growth of 8.5% during the 7th plan did not reflect the strength but the ominous sign of the natural course of development getting strangled, introducing elitist growth pattern. The newly found development pattern based on luxurious durables which registered a high growth rate of 14% per annum during eighties against 3.2% rate of durable consumable spoke out the real source of current crisis of foreign exchange. Since the growth rate on durable had been maintained mainly depending upon imported capital goods and parts, the trade imbalance had shoot up to Rs. 67,315 crores during eighties against the figure of Rs. 7,417 crores during seventies. The paper asserted that the development strategy in under developed world should be based on 'basic need development approach' as recommended by the 1976 International Tripartite Conference which was held under the auspices of ILO.

In the current international context when imperialism was mounting pressure against the Third World to convert it into a satellite to the first World, the paper asserted the urgency for the Asian Trade Unions coming close and also to play the leading role in paving the path of South-South Co-operation. The paper warmly congratulated the ACFTU for organising the seminar.

Great Industrial Boom in China :

Since the year 1984 when China had decided to reform its economy through opening to outside world, decentralisation of economic activities under

the system of centralised planning, releasing individual initiative through a number of material incentives including the partial introduction of market mechanism, the country has advanced in all directions. The papers circulated by the Chinese delegates and physical investigations of a number of industries vouches the Chinese claim. GNP is increased by 9% per annum on an average during eighties with commensurating growth of living standard to an average of 6% per annum. Its unemployment level is only 2.6% which would decline during the current plan period, ACFTU leadership claimed. The country is poised for eighth five year plan which has guaranteed the average growth of 6% per annum. As for the status of foreign investment in total industrial economy, it was explained by the Chinese leadership that it was just 4% against 91% of the total investment. Private investment and self-employment together formed 4% of the total investment.

Notwithstanding this tremendous development, the country has started experiencing the fallouts of open door policy. Corruption in administration, dollar crunch to a section of the people, tendency of westernisation of culture were visible. Chinese state and the party is well aware about the corruption and the state has started taking stringent action. The Communist Party has intensified ideological activities to resist the negative aspects of open door policy.

Anti-imperialism is Still Powerful :

The trend of discussions in the plenary sessions, tone of the papers circulated by the trade unions and my intense talk with the individual delegations have made me to understand that anti-imperialism still forms the mightiest platform of working class unity in Asian countries. Though during the days of the seminar cruelest form of vendeta against socialism was being engineered in the land of October revolution and worldwide campaign was at the top, I found no rejoicing even amongst those leaders who follow anti-communism. Trade unions in the Indian sub-continent apprehend that the pressure from the imperialists would accelerate for privatisation and opening the countries to multinationals. One of the important leaders from Pakistan Trade Unions told me that even those intellectuals who are inclined to Muslim fundamentalism are afraid of the developments which may emerge out of the new co-relation of forces. Phillipine delegates demanded that US must withdraw its base from their country. One of the delegates from Malayasia informed in the group talks that their land was being leased out to multinationals in the name of attracting foreign investment.

Faith Reposed in Socialism :

During my stay at China I had discussion with a number of leaders who represented the socialist countries. This includes the veteran leaders from ACFTU (China) and also GFTUK (DPRK). All

of them were convinced that the present problems of socialism are temporary and this could in no case be able to reverse the course of history. One of the most veteran leaders of A CFTU felt that the current developments in Soviet Union was the part of the evolutionary procese of history. It was a twist which had been seen in the historical process of evolution of a feudal society to capitalism. ACFTU reaffirmed that whatever developments may take place in other parts of the world, China would follow the path of socialism. China cannot just survive without socialism.

Anganwadi Women to Join mass Actions Against Economic Policies of the Government

The Working Committee of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers met on the 6th and 7th of Sept. 1991 and reviewed the work in Anganwadi and the developments since the formation of the All India Federation, and chalked out the future course of action. While formulating the future programme, the working committee took into serious consideration the developments in the international and in the national sphere.

The Working Committee viewed with very serious concern the recent happenings in USSR and condemned the attacks on the very foundation of the socialist system. The Working Committee reaffirmed its faith on socialism and called upon all to uphold its banner.

The Working Committee also condemned in bitterest terms the anti-people policies particularly the economic policies and steps already taken by the Congress (I) Government at the Centre. The Railway budget, the general budget, the IMF loans on denigrating terms, the Industrial Policy etc all that have been announced are totally against the interest of the working people. Announcement of the policy of privatisation of the public sector served to weaken the economic self-reliance of our country and consequently fraught with the danger of threat to our political independence.

The policy of privatisation was going to hard hit

the Anganwadi workers and helpers as it was understood that the Central Government was contemplating transfer of the entire ICDS project to private hands. The Working Committee while condemnin such a move on the part of Central Government declared its firm resolve to fight back such attempts. Privatisation of ICDS projects will not only harm the Anganwadi workers and helpers it will ultimately deprive the mothers and children for whom the scheme is intended. The working committee called upon all Anganwadi workers and helpers to organise themselves resolutely to save the ICDS project from being destroyed by private interests and demanded its continuation with better benefits.

The Working Committee welcomed the decision to hold the all India T. U. convention on 17th September 1991 and the mass rally in Delhi on 27th September 1991 and called upon all to join these programmes against the present anri-people policies of the Central Government.

The Working Committee also decided to participate in any call for action that may be decided by the convention. The Working Committee called upon the states to organise conferences and conventions as also build up movements within the states.